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Paul Christian Radloff

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Paul Christian Radloff

The ‘new right’

The English Defence League and PEGIDA

Master’s Thesis

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| Author: | Paul Christian Radloff |
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| Supervisor: | Mgr. Jan Charvát, M.A., Ph.D. |
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Abstract

This thesis is aimed at analysing key similarities and differences of the English Defence League and the German-born social movement PEGIDA. Whereas both movements have a common goal, to stop the perceived Islamisation of their respective countries, and Europe as a whole, the means and methods vary greatly. Moreover, it is argued that the followership of said organisations differ in age, social background and motivation. Both organisations are able to exert a certain amount of influence on their supporters, the rest of the society, as well as policy-makers and the political elite. Both organisations have influenced the societal and political climate of their respective countries of origin and also in the countries in the European neighbourhood with links to individuals and organisations in North America.

Keywords

English Defence League, PEGIDA, the new right, Islamophobia, Islamisation, Europe, the West, populism, (cultural-)nationalism

Extent of work

109,832 characters

Declaration of Authorship:

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. The thesis as submitted is 109,832 keystrokes long (including spaces), 60 manuscript pages.

In Prague, July 29, 2016

Signature: Paul Christian Radloff

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| EDL | English Defence League |
| (E)CJM | (European) Counter-Jihad Movement |
| SIOE | Stop Islamisation of Europe |
| UAF | Unite Against Fascism |
| BNP | British National Party |
| PEGIDA | Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West |
| DDfE | Direkte Demokratie für Europa – Direct Democracy for Europe |
| AfD | Alternative für Deutschland – Alternative for Germany |
| NPD | Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands |
| BKA | Bundeskriminalamt |

1 INTRODUCTION

The English Defence League (EDL) and PEGIDA (‘Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes’) represent social movements in two of the largest European nations, concerned with the perceived Islamisation of Europe, a perceived threat that is posed by such a development. These social movements claim to stand up for and defend the Jewish-Christian nature and culture of Europe. They can be regarded to be part of a wider European/Western development in which right-wing populist parties and extra-parliamentary organisations have witnessed a (re-)emergence and growing support. Far-right parties gathered substantial support in various European countries, such as the Greek Golden Dawn, The Front National in France, UKIP in Great Britain, Geert Wilders’ ‘Partij voor de Vrijheid’ (‘Party for Freedom’) in the Netherlands, the Austrian FPÖ (‘Freedom Party of Austria’) and the Polish PiS (‘Law and Justice’). Many of these parties have relied on the growing anti-Islamic sentiment that also have been spread by social movements such as the above mentioned EDL and PEGIDA, in regards to Islamist terrorism and especially the refugee crisis. The German Federal Republic has recently been the birthplace to two notable right-wing organisations, arguably representing the ‘new right’, one of them naturally being the aforementioned street movement called PEGIDA alongside the political party called the ‘*Alternative für Deutschland*’ (‘Alternative for Germany’, short AfD). The AfD has made headlines ever since its formation and has undergone a political self-discovery so to speak, which has witnessed a notable shift to the right, including racial and ‘*völkisch*’ terminology by some of its leaders and members. Initially a Euro-sceptic party with a focus on financial matters, such as the Greek bailout, its former leader economist Bernd Lucke was ousted and replaced by Frauke Petry. Since then, it has been especially obvious that anti-Muslim sentiments and policies stand at the core of the party. AfD board member Alexander Gauland described the PEGIDA movement to be the

parties' "natural ally", whereas his colleague Bernd Höcke labelled them as "good and right" and recently stepped forward to promote an alliance between the protesters and his party.¹

The problems Europe and the European Union are facing are wide-ranging and encompass the ongoing economic hardship of some of its member states, an identity crisis of the community itself, the threat of extremist Islamic terrorism and the refugee crisis among others. "Growing economic and social difficulties in Europe have witnessed the rise of cultural intolerance and extremist nationalism and a shift to the right across the continent."² These are topics that have arguably dominated the political, as well as societal sphere of policy-making and public debate in recent years. The EU member states were thus far unable to decide on a multilateral approach and policies on how to handle the refugee crisis, apart from the highly debated and criticised EU-Turkey deal. Various member states, including the governments of Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic have taken unilateral approaches and have not allowed for few if any refugees, in particular refugees with a Muslim background to come into the country and seek asylum and have strongly voiced their dissatisfaction with the refugee policies pursued most notably by German chancellor Angela Merkel. The above mentioned (re-) emergence of far-right parties is part of a development that member states all across the European Union and the European continent have witnessed over the past years. With the establishment of the PEGIDA movement and the AfD the German government is now also faced with considerable opposition from the right corner, which could impact the outlook of its society considerably. Whether or not the establishment of PEGIDA and AfD might have come as a surprise to some, they do seem to voice deeply entrenched fears of the German society, or rather parts of it, as Nachtwey, suggests that the PEGIDA "protest mirror a society, in which wealth is growing, but the

¹ Bielicki, J., & Schneider, J. (2014, December 9). *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Retrieved June 5, 2016, from Süddeutsche Zeitung: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/reaktionen-auf-demos-afd-spitze-stellt-sich-hinter-pegida-1.2259371>

Debes, M. (2016, April 11). *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung*. Retrieved May 25, 2016, from Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung: <http://www.thueringer-allgemeine.de/web/zgt/politik/detail/-/specific/Hoecke-will-Allianz-von-AfD-und-Pegida-gegen-Kanzlerdiktatorin-1882713478>

² Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2), p. 188

participation diminishes. In a Europe, economically and socially declining, politically tumbling, Germany appears as a bastion of stability – which is threatened by Muslims, the European debt states etc.”³ As Virginie Andre notes, “the emergence of large Muslim communities across Europe constitutes what some have referred to as “a new Islamic reality,” which is forcing Europe to reconsider its approach to religion and secularity. The increased cultural diversity arising from post-war immigration has prompted debates across Europe on core values and national identities.”⁴ It is thus this debate in which the EDL as well as PEGIDA have tapped in. Both organisations are concerned with a growing Islamisation, both organisations have declared themselves to be defending the cultural values and identity of their nation and Europe as a whole.

The EDL, which had been described within the Counter-Jihad scene as “the most significant anti-sharia movement in Europe”⁵ and arguably paved the way for social movements and organisations, such as PEGIDA, which now capitalise on people’s anxieties and worries, in order to press an agenda on the country’s politicians. As the EDL may be regarded as the forerunner for far-right movements, including PEGIDA, an analysis of the main Counter-Jihad movements in Europe could be enlightening. It might shed light on the phenomena of the EDL and why it has declined, and on the other hand the reasons behind PEGIDA’s relative success, and how it could contribute to the continuation of a British (bourgeois) far-right social protest movement.

³ Nachtwey, O. (2015). “Rechte Wutbürger Pegida oder das autoritäre Syndrom”, *Blätter für Deutsche und International Politik*. 60(3), p. 81

⁴ Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2), p. 188

⁵ Goodwin, M. (2013). *The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge*. Chatham House, p. 5

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis relies on various articles, studies and reports concerned with the English Defence League and PEGIDA, as well as interviews with members of the organisations and the authors own experiences during rallies of both movements. Regarding the EDL, ‘the English Defence League Report’, as well as the study ‘A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe’s Counter-Jihad Movement’ play a central role in information gathering and to establish a broad background. The EDL has been subject to a series of investigations whether it be TV stations, such as the BBC or scientific research conducted by social scientists, investigating the movement’s impact on the British society and the broader Counter-Jihad movement in the West. The EDL had some serious implications on local societies, such as Luton and Rotherham and the literature suggests that it poses, or rather posed a serious challenge to the integrity and functioning of British society. In 2012, YouGov conducted an extensive survey of 1,666 adults in the UK, which was in turn drawn from an online panel of 350,000 adults. The survey was conducted in order to examine the British public’s attitude towards topics emphasised by the EDL and other Counter-Jihad movements, as well as analysing a smaller group of those polled, who identified to support the EDL. The survey was then discussed and analysed in the Chatham House report ‘The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge’. Further, Bartlett and Littler conducted a survey with EDL sympathisers to shed light on their motivations for supporting a social movement, such as the EDL. They supported, or rather enhanced their findings with a demographic analysis of the EDL’s Facebook page to find out more about the EDL’s supporters. Finally, they ran a regression analysis and compared those supporters who had partaken in an EDL rally and those who had not, in order to determine underlying factors, which increase the likelihood of a supporter protesting alongside the English Defence League.

It will be discussed at a later stage how and why the EDL splintered and was arguably replaced by other right-wing movements, nonetheless, the EDL was a frontrunner in the European anti-Islamic movement and thus also contributed to the rise of other populist, right-wing movements such as PEGIDA.

In regards to the PEGIDA movement, various studies were conducted by Rucht, Nachtwey and foremost Vorländer, Herold and Schäller amongst others. These studies provide excellent data, when concerned with the composition of the movement's followers. Vorländer et al., in their book 'Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum?', surveyed demonstrators at three PEGIDA rallies in December 2014 and January 2015, inquiring their age, sex, education, profession, income, religious affiliation, party affiliation, frequency of attendance, origin and their motivation to attend PEGIDA demonstrations. 64.1 per cent of 1,106 asked refused cooperation, leaving 397 polled PEGIDA protesters. The analysis by Vorländer and his colleagues was the first one to inquire the PEGIDA phenomena at that stage of its development. The scholars thus focused on the composition of attendees and their motivations to attend the PEGIDA demonstrations, in order to offer a sociodemographic image of this social movement. Moreover, due to the intense media coverage of PEGIDA, Vorländer and his colleagues were able to test the hypotheses made by the media about the character of the movement. The media's perception of PEGIDA was rather negative and subjective. The media painted a picture of uneducated men from society's periphery with xenophobic resentments. Although, some of the media's impressions were authentic and therefore not wrong, these impressions offered not enough empirical evidence to draw generalisations about PEGIDA as a social movement. The complicated relationship between the media and PEGIDA and its supporters will be highlighted at a later stage, but it is worth mentioning that the study conducted by Vorländer, Herold and Schäller contributed to a more differentiated discourse about PEGIDA as a movement and the sort of people it attracts.

Most of the literature on PEGIDA proposed that it will eventually disappear, also because of its non-parliamentary character, yet the protests are ongoing, and PEGIDA has actually spread to other countries in Europe as well as North America. However, although the future trajectories proposed by these studies might not have been entirely accurate, they offer an interesting insight into the people's motivations for attending PEGIDA rallies. Both movements, the EDL and PEGIDA have enjoyed extensive media coverage, which ensures a relatively well account of development of both groups. In order to assess the steps in the respective developments, this study also relies on press and media reports, TV documentaries, interviews with organisers and other sources of evidence.

3 METHODOLOGY

This thesis is a comparative research of the English Defence League and the German-born PEGIDA movement, which has spread across Europe and the Western hemisphere. It aims to provide insights into both organisations, in the case of PEGIDA a more detailed one into the 'original' Dresden-based PEGIDA movement, in order to analysis the decline of the EDL and the relative success, thus far, of the PEGIDA movement.

The hypothesis posed is that the PEGIDA model is likely to be the more successful one, due to its bourgeois image, which attracts a broader set of people, including members of the middle-class. Whereas EDL can be described as a (white) working-class protest movement, with more extreme elements, including football hooligans, PEGIDA seems to have taken its place in forming alliances across Europe, with offshoots even forming in the US and Canada. Thus, PEGIDA has arguably taken over a lead role of uniting people behind common goal, to stop the Islamisation of the West.

4 THE ENGLISH DEFENCE LEAGUE

4.1 EDL – A BEGINNING

The English Defence League is “an Islamophobic, new social movement, born of a particularly unattractive and intolerant strand of English nationalism. It is symptomatic of an English identity crisis, drawing on native English ‘identity’ as its principal weapon against an ‘alien’ Islam identity.”⁶ The organisation’s self-understanding is that of a grassroots protest movement, “best understood as a right-wing social movement, that deploys mass mobilisation, or the threat of mass mobilisation, as its prime source of influence.”⁷ Its aim is to force the British government to tackle the perceived issue and ‘ban the terrorists’, get extreme Islamists ‘off the streets’ of Britain.

Before the organisation came into existence, there were different, unorganised cells and individuals who were concerned with extremist Islamic terrorism, essentially forming the early stages of the British Counter-Jihad movement. One of said individuals was Paul Ray, a BNP supporter who was responsible for a blog by the name of *Lionheart*, which he started in 2007. Ray was inspired by the growing Counter-Jihad movement that had formed in the US after 9/11, subsequently his blog suggested strong anti-Islam notions and sentiments. In turn, one of the leading figures of the US Counter-Jihad movement, Pamela Geller, noticed Ray and with the opportunity to establish an UK-based Counter-Jihad movement interviewed him, in order to help promote his *Lionheart* blog. After an arrest due to incitement in 2008, Pamela Geller portrayed Ray as a British patriot who was being persecuted for his views by his government, supposedly intimidated by and submissive to Islam.⁸

⁶ Copsey, N. (2010). *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country And Our Values Of Social Inclusion, Fairness And Equality*. UK: Faith Matters.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe’s Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

The forerunner to the EDL street movement was formed under the name United Peoples of Luton (UPL), amongst others, which organised a street protest on 13 April 2009, as a response to a demonstration held by the extremist Islam4UK organisation weeks earlier which verbally attacked British troops returning from a mission in Afghanistan. The UPL march was organised by Tommy Robinson and Paul Ray among others and was held in the town of Luton, yet was shut down by the police, because the organisers had not had prior Police permission. The UPL protest was sparked due to the demeanour of the Islam4UK⁹, as the UPL website at the time read: *“The whole country witnessed the hate-filled scum that crashed the soldiers homecoming.”*¹⁰ The UPL march marked the joining of forces of football hooligans, most notably a group called Casuals United, in turn a coalition of hooligans, and the right-wing activists surrounding Tommy Robinson and Paul Ray. In response to the disallowance of the first march, the group set out to demonstrate again on 24 May 2009 under the slogan “Ban the terrorists”, demanding the Police to act against the men behind the Islam4UK organisation. Notably, the UPL/EDL recognised at the very first stage of its formation that not all Muslims are automatically terrorists, already depicting the inclusive outlook the group wanted to portray in the following months and years, as it stated: *“We must stress that this is a very small number of Muslim fanatics and not the wider Muslim community so people of Luton lets unite against these people who hate everything our country stands for and turn out in our numbers be that Muslim, Hindu, Catholic, Christian, Jewish, White, Black or Asian.”*¹¹

Far-right activist Paul Ray took to the street again with Tommy Robinson and the Casuals United under Jeff Marsh, in order to support his claims and views that the British nation is under threat by radical Islamic extremism. Ultimately, the “founding of the EDL represents a type of interaction that political scientist Roger Eatwell has usefully described as ‘cumulative

⁹ Islam4UK was a radical Islamist organisation headed by Anjem Choudary. It was proscribed in 2010 under the Terrorism Act 2004

¹⁰ UPL website taken from: Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

extremism', that is to say, a process by which one type of extremism (Islamist) can spark off another type of extremism.¹² In the case of the EDL, as we have seen, it was the actions of a small group of Islamists that provided the immediate trigger and it occurred within a local context of communal polarisation."¹³ The 2009 Ahle Sunnah al Jamah protest acted "as a catalyst for the formation of the EDL", because formerly only a small militant group based in Luton, individuals as Tommy Robinson decided to become more organised, firstly forming the United People of Luton, and eventually the EDL. "In 2004 we held our own protest when we held a banner up saying 'Ban the Luton Taliban'. ... We realised we didn't just want them off the streets of Luton, we wanted them off the streets of Britain. When we saw Birmingham's demonstration [by a group called British Citizens Against Muslim Extremists] they were using the same slogans as us: 'We want our country back', 'Terrorists off the streets', 'Extremists out', 'Rule Britannia'. From there the EDL was set up."¹⁴ In June 2009, Paul Ray and Tommy Robinson eventually founded the EDL, essentially a coalition between the United Peoples of Luton and the aforementioned football hooligans.¹⁵

Known BNP supporter Ray claimed that the British national and cultural identity must be protected and secured, and the BNP is, or rather was the frontrunner, "because they are Anglo-Saxon British citizens exactly the same as me whose country this is, whose forefathers fought and died for this country and who want to preserve the British way of life."¹⁶ Despite his open support of the BNP and his involvement with the EDL, Ray denied the claim to be a neo-Nazi, or to have any racist opinions and views. The inclusion of figures such as Ray in the higher

¹² Eatwell, R. (2006). Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain. *Political Quarterly*, 77,2: pp. 204-216

¹³ Copsey, N. (2010). *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country And Our Values Of Social Inclusion, Fairness And Equality*. UK: Faith Matters.

¹⁴ Booth, R., Taylor, M. and Lewis, P. (2009, September 12). *The Guardian*. 'English Defence League: Chaotic Alliance of Far Right Groups Stirs Up Trouble on Streets: Football Fans are Being Recruited to Join Protests against Muslims. How Worried Should the Authorities Be?' Retrieved June 12, 2016, from the Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/11/english-defence-league-chaotic-alliance>

¹⁵ Copsey, N. (2010). *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country And Our Values Of Social Inclusion, Fairness And Equality*. UK: Faith Matters.

¹⁶ Ray, P. (2007, June 15). *Lionheart*. Retrieved May 17, 2016, from Lionheart: <http://lionheartuk.blogspot.de/2007/06/my-political-stance.html>

circle of the EDL organisation underlines the ambivalence of the EDL in two aspects. Firstly, it does not want to appear to have a connection to an outwardly racist party such as the BNP, especially opposing the notion of being the parties 'foot soldiers'. The report underlines this by identifying the EDL not to be "the 'street-fighting' wing of the BNP [since] it did not emerge from the established far-right but from several ultra-patriotic 'anti-Jihadist' groups with origins in the football casual subculture."¹⁷ Secondly, the movement claims to be anti-racist and inclusive to all who are opposing the perceived threat by Islamist extremism. Whether this claim is valid will be discussed below, however, the EDL did manage to gather support from various factions of the British society and to include them into their structure, including people of Jewish and Sikh faith, members of the LGBTQ-community and black people, among others.¹⁸ However, despite the claims to be an anti-racist movement, the EDL had attracted far-right activists and other elements of the far-right from the beginning. For instance, the march on May 24 2009 ended in assaults against the Asian minority, as well as convictions of public order offences. The fluidity of the organisation, the incoherent strategy and its tactics, as well as the voiced anti-Islamist and highly nationalist messages, the EDL inevitably attracted (race-) nationalists and neo-Nazis.¹⁹

Therefore, the English Defence League has often been labelled as a racist and fascist organisation by the media, politicians, and counter protest movements, most notably Unite Against Fascism (UAF). Certainly, the movement has attracted individuals who hold racist and fascist beliefs, members of the BNP and other right-wing groups, such as Combat 18. Yet, the organisational leadership itself has often rejected those claims and claims that it only opposes militant, extremist Islam, a perceived threat to the British public, its safety and culture.²⁰ Yet,

¹⁷ Copsey, N. (2010). *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country And Our Values Of Social Inclusion, Fairness And Equality*. UK: Faith Matters.

¹⁸ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

¹⁹ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

²⁰ Sheffield, J. (2011). "Bye-Bye Fascists" – A Critical Analysis of the English Defence League. *Internet Journal of Criminology*. p. 10

as the summer of 2009 proved to be a time of uncertainty, in regards to the direction the movement ought to take and the people it attracted. Divisions in the organisational circle were the result and cofounder Paul Ray left the group in August 2009, as a result of his concern of the presence of known neo-Nazis and BNP supporters, such as Chris Renton (BNP), as well as his critique to hold a rally on 8 August (8/8 – 88 is a known neo-Nazi symbol, referring to “Heil Hitler”): “Anyone with the slightest bit of knowledge about neo-Nazis knows the meaning of 8/8 which is why I pulled out of any active participation.”²¹ To Ray these developments were a clear indication that neo-Nazi fascists had hijacked and taken over the movement. This moment was crucial for the further development of the groups, as Ray further explained, “It was a pivotal moment, not just for me pulling out but the movement as a whole because going out onto the streets in protest on 8/8 was always going to bring Nazis onto the streets, which it did. Photos of EDL Nazis are all across the internet now, with the EDL now branded a neo-Nazi movement because of this. I advised the leadership group not to go out onto the streets this day, to postpone for 1 week which would have sent a clear message to everyone... but those calls went unheeded, and the rest is history.”²²

The protest at the Birmingham Bullring shopping centre saw violent clashes between the EDL and Casuals United and the counter-protesters United against fascism (UAF), however violence was also sparked when Asian men attacked young, white males who had no connection to the EDL, “but were assaulted because of their ethnicity and their close proximity to the protests.”²³ The Birmingham protest and the incidents were followed by a police investigation, seeking the aggressors of the violent assaults and the fact that many of the suspects had an Asian background, whereas the victims were white was propagated by the EDL, which claimed that the British police “had appeased ‘radical Islamists’ and that white people had been the victims

²¹ Copsey, N. (2010). *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country And Our Values Of Social Inclusion, Fairness And Equality*. UK: Faith Matters.

²² Ryan, M. (2010, March 4). *Lionheart*. Retrieved May 17, 2016, from Lionheart: <http://lionheartuk.blogspot.de/2010/03/infiltration-of-edl.html>

²³ Garland, J., & Treadwell, J. (2010, January). 'No Surrender to the Taliban': Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia and the Rise of the English Defence League. *Papers from the British Criminology Conference*(Vol. 10).

of Muslim violence.”²⁴ The EDL capitalised from this situation in terms of attendance at rallies, as well as frequency of protests, many of them ending in violence and a number of arrests. A protest in December in Nottingham, attended by 500 EDL supporters descended into disorder and violence, despite a security operation costing over £1m.²⁵

These events and a growing number of EDL supporters highlighted a growing confidence of the organisation, which inevitably was regarded to be “a serious threat to the community cohesion of many urban areas as [the EDL’s] mixture of English patriotism, aggression and Islamophobia seemed to be welcomed by its target audience of disaffected and disenchanted white working class males involved with, or at the fringes of, the football hooligan scene.”²⁶

Arguably, this is one aspect of difference or rather improvement when comparing PEGIDA to the EDL. From the start, it has sought public distance from the established far-right movements, especially violent ones. With a clearly outlined position paper, which is described in more detail below, strict guidelines of conduct at public rallies and protests, including the ban of alcohol, the organisation was with a few violent exceptions (i.e. LEGIDA), to keep a rather peaceful demeanour, in terms of conduct, thus able to uphold a bourgeois appearance. Unlike the EDL, PEGIDA rallies rarely sparked violent confrontations with other political protest or the police, the most notable exception being the first rallies of LEGIDA in Leipzig. The EDL on the other hand, unintentionally or not, has had trouble containing their supporters and followers, many of the rallies resulting in heavy riots, clashes with the police and counter-protesters. Although the EDL tried to rid itself of fascist tendencies within after the Birmingham march on 8 August 2009, the narrative of a working class movement, left behind by globalisation and a liberal, multiculturalist government were questioned, especially after Tommy Robinson and his cousin Kevin Carroll appeared publicly as joint leaders of the group. Kevin Carroll nominated a BNP

²⁴ Garland, J., & Treadwell, J. (2010, January). 'No Surrender to the Taliban': Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia and the Rise of the English Defence League. *Papers from the British Criminology Conference*(Vol. 10).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

candidate in his hometown Luton in council elections in 2007, later claimed to be “hoodwinked” by the party into signing the nomination. In a TV interview with the BBC, he denied all allegations to be racist or to be a BNP supporter, in fact he says he cannot be racist, because he fathered black children.²⁷

With Robinson and Carroll heading the organisation, the EDL appeared to be determined to drive out fascist and neo-Nazi elements and improve their public demeanour, which however also resulted in a decline in numbers, and the splintering of the far-right into various cells, formerly united by the EDL. Tommy Robinson appeared especially active in portraying the EDL to be anti-racist and anti-Nazi, supported by Guramit Singh, an early EDL member, frequent speaker at EDL rallies, and the head of the organisation’s Sikh division. The organisation performed publicity stunts to strengthen their image as anti-fascist, including the burning of a Nazi flag.

In January 2013, Tommy Robinson was arrested and jailed after travelling to the United States on a friend’s passport. At the same time, the EDL’s splintering process continued and the movement began crumbling as an organisation. Due to ongoing hijacking of the EDL by far-right movements and racist and anti-Semitic behaviour at EDL marches, the leader of its Jewish division, Roberta Moore stepped down, criticising the leadership to be unable to part with the Nazis within the organisation. Further, after a failed attempt to enter the political process together with the British Freedom party launched in April of 2012, Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carroll declared their cooperation with Muslim think-tank Quilliam Foundation to tackle the threat of radical Islam, and thus their departure from the EDL in October 2013.

²⁷ BBC. (2010, May 20). Retrieved April 14, 2016, from BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/tv/entries/e8b806bf-8d87-3f22-b2ea-2bf3c613d8a4>

4.2 MOTIVES

In the mission statement, the EDL lists five aspects central to its agenda. Firstly, the protection and promotion of human rights, including the claim to be a human rights organisation. The protest staged by Anjem Choudary and his Islam4UK group were “those of a minority, we believe that they reflect other forms of religiously-inspired intolerance and the barbarity that are thriving amongst certain sections of the Muslim population in Britain: including, but not limited to, the denigration and oppression of women, the molestation of children, the committing of so-called honour killings, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and continued support for those responsible for terrorist atrocities.”²⁸ The organisation claims to oppose the assumption to “that all Muslims are complicit in or somehow responsible”, but demands the opportunity of free and open discussion about issues, including terrorism, and claims it will “work to protect the inalienable rights of all people to protest against radical Islam’s encroachment into the lives of non-Muslims.” The EDL demands a reform of the Islam faith, including the claim that “British Muslims should be able to safely demand reform of their religion, in order to make it more relevant to the needs of the modern world and more respectful of other groups in society.”²⁹ The organisation views (radical) Islam incompatible with the British and more generally the European way of life, encompassing democratic ideals, such as freedom of speech, social liberties and secularism, due to a belief that Muslims would rather accept Sharia law than the British laws. British Muslims must be given the opportunity to free themselves from the supposed ‘stranglehold’ of radical Islam on British Muslims, dominating Muslim organisations and Mosques, leading to a state of fearfulness and isolation, especially amongst women whom “it encases in the Burqa.” Radical Islam “misrepresents their [British Muslims] views, stifles

²⁸ Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

²⁹ Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

freedom of expression and indoctrinates their children, whilst continually doing a discredit to those who do wish to peacefully co-exist with their fellow Britons.”

Secondly, the promotion of democracy and the rule of law by opposing Sharia. As aforementioned, the general belief is that the ultimate goal of radical Islam is to impose Sharia law in Europe, it is thus needed to oppose such tendencies and promote democracy and the rule of law. The concept of Sharia is completely opposed, ultimately viewed as and only functional as “a complete alternative to” the existing laws and norms, ‘legal, political and social systems.’ The imposition of Sharia law is regarded to be creeping its way into British society, in, for instance, so-called parallel-societies in which Islamic courts operate and foremost the availability of halal meat. The perceived threat of the imposition of Sharia law is a central aspect of the narrative of the Islamisation of the West. It is perceived as a “process by which the supremacy of Islam is taking place by whatever means Muslims and their allies use”³⁰ and thus functions as an inspiration to and justification of existence of social movements such as the EDL and PEGIDA.

Thirdly, the EDL demands a reform public education, in regards to Islam, in order to ensure “that the public get a balanced picture of Islam.”³¹ According to the EDL, the treatment of Islam by the political establishment and the media has been inaccurate and according to the ‘needs of policy-makers’ and not the British society. This has made problem-solving impossible and has led to ‘self-defeating and destructive policy’, and has made the British government a propaganda tool of the Muslim Brotherhood. The ‘sanitised’ portrayal of Islam have affected policy-making and the ‘harmony and security of the nation.’ The EDL understands Islam as “not just a religious system, but a political and social ideology that seeks to dominate all non-believers and impose a harsh legal system that rejects democratic accountability and human

³⁰ SIOE. Retrieved June 13, 2016, from SIOE: <https://sioeeu.wordpress.com/about/>

³¹ Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

rights. It runs counter to all that we hold dear within our British liberal democracy, and it must be prepared to change, to conform to secular, liberal ideals and laws, and to contribute to social harmony, rather than causing divisions.”³²

Fourthly, a demand for ‘respecting tradition’ by “promoting the traditions and culture of England while at the same time being open to embrace the best that other cultures can offer.”

The narrative of the imposition of Sharia law is one that unites all movements opposing the Islamisation and a central aspect of recruitment. “According to the ideology the process of Islamisation will culminate in the imposition of Sharia.” It is argued that strict Sharia “is integral to Islam, and that Muslims are duty-bound to live by it and impose wherever they reside.”³³

Counter-Jihad movements, such as the EDL, PEGIDA and SIOE claim that Sharia is central to all Muslims and it is accordingly “presented as the only “true” Islam”³⁴, which in turn justifies the claim that any practicing Muslim “must strive to implement it, superseding the Western legal systems in the process.” Moreover, it is believed that Muslim integration is orchestrated in order to ensure Islam’s global victory and impose Sharia law in the West, including Britain. Thus, the organisation claims to defend the British culture, religion, democracy and freedom and does so by promoting cultural nationalism, which allowed the group to form ties with like-minded groups and individuals in Europe and the United States. “As a social movement, the EDL claims to be concerned primarily with defending England’s traditional, national and cultural identity against what it sees as the demonic threat of Islam.”³⁵

The fourth point of the mission statement once again can be used as a claim that the EDL is in fact anti-racist, or at least the organisers initial intention was to be an anti-racist organisation.

³² Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

³³ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

³⁴ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), p. 42

³⁵ Copsey, N. (2010). *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country And Our Values Of Social Inclusion, Fairness And Equality*. UK: Faith Matters. 1.17

It is accepted that culture is not stagnant or static and that certain aspects change over time, contributions by other cultures can be made which make a “culture stronger and more vibrant.” Yet, the EDL claims that policy-makers “impose non-English cultures on the English people” and thus undermine the domestic cultural heritage. The mission statement rejects the notion of ‘cultural sensitivity’. Migrants are expected to respect the domestic culture whereas “the best of their culture will be absorbed naturally”. The EDL claims that it is open to all support, “from people of all races, all faiths, all political persuasions, and all lifestyle choices.” The sole opponent is claimed to be radical Islam and the Islamisation of Britain.

The EDL’s final objective is the international cooperation amongst like-minded groups and individuals, as it evident in the endorsement of the EDL by Pamela Geller and the founding of various defence leagues across Europe. Thus, the fifth and final part of the EDL’s mission statement states that it “is keen to join with others who share our values”, promoting international cooperation amongst Counter-Jihad organisations, to work “in solidarity with others around the world.”³⁶

4.3 PROTESTS

As aforementioned, many of the EDL demonstrations were accompanied by violence, riot-like protests and followed by a series of arrests. EDL supporters often clashed with opposing groups, such as Unite Against Fascism (UAF), the police, but also clashes between white and Asian males were reported.³⁷ Although claiming to be a group of peaceful protest against the rise of radical Islam, the group’s call to protest was often heard by elements of the football hooligan scene and other violent elements of the British society. Garland and Treadwell have suspected

³⁶ Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

³⁷ Garland, J., & Treadwell, J. (2010, January). 'No Surrender to the Taliban': Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia and the Rise of the English Defence League. *Papers from the British Criminology Conference*(Vol. 10).

that links to these hooligan ‘firms’ could give the EDL access to a cluster of what they call ‘footsoldiers’. To Garland et al. the EDL’s Islamophobic views and provocative street army tactics mean that it poses the most serious threat to public order and community cohesion since the heyday of the National Front in the 1970s.”³⁸

The call to protest was primarily spread on the social media website Facebook, on which the EDL still has roughly 300,000 followers.³⁹ The number of demonstrators at EDL rallies heavily varied. Some protests were only attended by a couple of hundred supporters, others by a couple of thousand. The aforementioned protest on 8 August 2009 for instance was attended by around 900 EDL supporters, whereas a rally held in Glasgow just three months after, only drew approximately 70 to 150 people out on the streets.⁴⁰ Yet, the numbers were often large enough to cause considerable unrest and disorder at times, especially when the EDL was confronted by a counter-demonstration often provided by the UAF.

One of the more controversial rallies was held in Bradford on 28 August 2010. The protest was accompanied by a police presence of 1,300 officers, yet, the situation escalated as bottles and smoke bombs were thrown at counter-protesters and the police.⁴¹ The EDL claimed that 1,000 supporters had gathered in order to protest the Islamisation of Britain, however police estimates questioned this turn-out. Particularly formative for the organisation’s trajectory was however, that it was claimed that Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik had indeed attended this protest, leaving the EDL in a precarious situation, due to possible links of EDL organisers to

³⁸ Garland, J., & Treadwell, J. (2010, January). ‘No Surrender to the Taliban’: Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia and the Rise of the English Defence League. *Papers from the British Criminology Conference* (Vol. 10).

³⁹ Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

⁴⁰ Alan, R. (2011). Retrieved May 25, 2016, from the New English Review: http://www.newenglishreview.org/blog_direct_link.cfm/blog_id/24165

⁴¹ Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2)

BBC. (2010, August 28). Retrieved May 16, 2016, from BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bradford-west-yorkshire-11121005>

Breivik. Assumptions, which were of course denied by leading EDL figures such as Tommy Robinson, as well as former EDL member Paul Ray.

Arguably the EDL reached the height of popularity, when concerned with sheer numbers of protesters on the streets at 5 February 2011, when the organisation marched in Luton alongside defence leagues from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and France and around 3,000 people took to the streets.

The events on 31 March 2012 held in Aarhus, Denmark, and on 4 August 2012 in Stockholm, Sweden were of great importance for the broader Counter-Jihad movements, because these events mark the manifestation of the ‘Stop the Islamization of Nations’ (SION), an ‘American Freedom Defense Initiative’, and also a new phase of international cooperation amongst the European and International far-right groups concerned with radical Islam. The event was attended by defence leagues from across Europe and would, according to Tommy Robinson “give birth to a new era of standing up against the Islamisation of Europe”, while also providing the opportunity to meet with like-minded groups and ensure that “these people are not neo-Nazis, are not lunatics, do support Israel, do have the same agenda as us”.⁴² Despite a limited attendance of about 50 to 60 people in Aarhus, the main aim of this event was to form ties across Europe and America, thus more of a strategic importance, than anything else. “The gathering signalled the start of a coherent strategy to create a decentralised network and unite likeminded Counter-Jihad groups in Europe and America.”⁴³ As Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun have identified, the meetings were characterised by an absence of the ‘*classic*’ EDL hooligan elements, but was made up of older people with various political backgrounds, indicating that these were foremost attended by the leaders, the ‘*elite*’ of the new far-right movements,

⁴² Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), p. 20

⁴³ *Ibid.*

assuming the incentive was to establish a coherent strategy, physical presence in the respective countries and to stop solely “relying on online activism”.⁴⁴

The event held in Stockholm five months later concluded with a series of arguments which the Counter-Jihad movement views as central to their agenda and which, in parts are comparable to the above mentioned mission statement, while being more specific. These conclusions entail the abandonment of the public by the political establishment which is describes as a mere bystander in the “gradual destruction of Western society by Islam”, being in possession of the ‘*real truth*’ and in a war against press and media. This, a common theme amongst far-right groups, is once again underlined by claiming that press and political elites are overtly politically correct and abide to a self-censorship, which prevents any discussions about Islam, in turn curtailing freedom of speech. It becomes evident, that the Counter-Jihad movement, including the EDL see themselves at war with radical Islam on the one hand, and with the political establishment, the media, the political left on the other, the latter aiding, or at least by-standing whilst radical Islam is slowly taking over the West. Thus, the activist claim to be at the forefront of a ‘long war’ to defend the cultural heritage of the West, democratic ideals and ‘the vision of a free society’, in which women can be free choose to dress, live with, etc. according to their wishes, amongst others. The Islamisation of the West is regarded to be factual, backed by examples, such as the ban of pork in Danish schools, or the perception of so-called ‘*no-go areas*’, a term used to refer to neighbourhoods across Europe which are predominantly Muslim. Furthermore, it is concluded that the Quran is regarded to be the ‘most dangerous book in the world’, because it justifies and advocates violence in the name of Allah. Therefore, Islam needs to be modernised and secularised if peaceful coexistence between Muslims and others is to take

⁴⁴ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), p. 20

place.⁴⁵ These arguments are in accordance with the mission statement released by the EDL through their Facebook page and the meetings in Aarhus and Stockholm played a pivotal role in the establishment of an internationally organised Counter-Jihad movement with independently operating movements united against a common opponent, radical Islam. Therefore, these meetings are regarded to be of importance to the new far-right movement, considering leading figures of the movement such as Tommy Robinson and Pamela Geller, amongst others are still to this day playing a part in the recruitment of followers and publicising their views. Moreover, apart from networking, these meetings offer an opportunity to pass on strategic advice from one group to another.

On 8 September 2013, the EDL staged a demonstration at Tower Hamlet, London. The protest ended with arrests of over 160 people, including Tommy Robinson who left the EDL shortly after.⁴⁶

Concluding, it can be said that the EDL held a series of rallies all over the UK with varying numbers of supporters and counter-protesters, mainly staged by the UAF. The EDL rallies often culminated in public disorder and arrests, which earned the organisation the reputation of 'drunken hooligans'. This has certainly played a role in the decline in the organisation's street presence, the reversion to online activism and its gradual splintering and dissolution. Although a protest was held on 20 February 2016 in Preston under the banner of the EDL⁴⁷, the turnout was rather small and many of the former supporters seem to have reoriented themselves and aligned with other, more successful far-right parties and movements, such as Britain First and possibly PEGIDA UK.

⁴⁵ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), pp. 20-21

⁴⁶ Johnston, I., & Kavanagh, J. (2013, September 8). *The Independent*. Retrieved June 21, 2016, from The Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/more-than-160-arrested-at-edl-tower-hamlets-march-8803110.html>

⁴⁷ Rebello, L. (2016, February 21). *International Business Times*. Retrieved June 11, 2016, from International Business Time: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/muslims-hand-out-food-roses-during-edl-anti-islam-march-preston-1545090>

4.4 PUBLIC PERCEPTION

4.4.1 The Public's attitude towards the EDL

In 2012, YouGov conducted a survey, asking the British public about their opinion on the EDL, but also on more general topics, such as satisfaction with politics, trust in politicians, immigration issues, and community relations, among others. The survey was based on a random sample of 1,666 adults from the UK, which in turn was drawn from an online panel of 350,000 adults. The panel was weighted to the profile of eligible voters on the basis of age, gender, class, religion, party affiliation, as well as newspaper readership. The survey included the regions of London (n=213), the South (n=541), Midlands/Wales (n=357), the North (n=410) and Scotland (n=145). The survey aimed at analysing the public's opinion on issues brought forward by Counter-Jihad groups, while simultaneously analysing 298 of those polled who firstly had heard of the EDL, knew what it stood for and secondly agreed with its motives, values, methods and tactics.⁴⁸

According to the YouGov survey of 2012, 60 per cent of those polled viewed the economy to be the single most important issue facing the United Kingdom, followed by 17 per cent regarding immigration and asylum to be the biggest issue. When given the option to select the three most pressing issues the UK is facing, the economy was identified by 79 per cent of those polled to be the one of the most serious issues, 48 per cent of the respondents also viewed immigration and asylum as one of the main problems, and roughly one third, 32 per cent regarded healthcare to be one of the major issues. Yet, the question of immigration has always been widely discussed, and more so since the refugee crisis and in the wake of the British EU-referendum. A YouGov survey of April 2016, concerned with said referendum indicates that the issue of immigration and asylum has increased its importance amongst the British public

⁴⁸ Goodwin, M. (2013). *The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge*. Chatham House.

and electorate. Given the question ‘Which ONE of the following will be most important to you in deciding how to vote in the referendum?’ 17 per cent of the 2044 respondents answered with which choice is likely to deal better with the issue of immigration. A total of 71 per cent of those polled regarded immigration within the last 10 years to the UK to be too high, whereas respondents were given the choice, among others, between the option ‘much too high’ (47%) or ‘little too high’ (24%). Moreover, 63 per cent of those polled agreed with the statement that there should be tighter limits on the amount of immigration into Britain.⁴⁹

Table 1: Public opinion of the EDL

| | Weighted Sample | 1666 |
|---|-------------------|------|
| | Unweighted Sample | 1666 |
| | | % |
| How much, if anything, do you know about The English Defence League? | | |
| I have heard of them and know exactly what they stand for | 33 | |
| I have heard of them but I'm unsure what they stand for | 42 | |
| I have never heard of them | 19 | |
| Don't know | 6 | |
| And how likely, if at all, would you ever be to join The English Defence League? | | |
| <i>[Only to those who had heard of the EDL n = 1282]</i> | | |
| Would never join this organisation | 77 | |
| Would consider joining this organisation | 9 | |
| I would consider myself to be a member of this organisation | 1 | |
| Don't know | 13 | |
| Thinking now about the English Defence League (EDL), which of these statements comes closest to your view? | | |
| <i>[Only to those who had heard of the EDL n = 1282]</i> | | |
| I agree with the values AND methods of the English Defence League | 3 | |
| I agree with the values of the English Defence League but not their methods | 21 | |
| I do not agree with either the values or the methods of the English Defence League | 47 | |
| Don't know | 29 | |
| And, from what you know, would you say that the English Defence League is or is not a racist organisation? | | |
| <i>[Only to those who had heard of the EDL n = 1282]</i> | | |
| Is a racist organisation | 53 | |
| Is NOT a racist organisation | 18 | |
| Don't know | 28 | |

Source: YouGov (2012)

Returning to the topic of the first YouGov survey, see Table 1, the respondents were asked about their knowledge of the EDL. According to the survey, 33 per cent of those polled had heard of the organisation and knew what it stood for, 42 per cent had heard of the EDL, however were unsure what it represented, 19 per cent claimed to have never heard of the EDL and 6 per cent of those polled answered ‘don’t know’.⁵⁰ These results leave 1,282 people in the survey that have heard of the EDL, which were then questioned on whether they would ever join the movement, if they agreed with its motives and methods and if they would regard it to be a racist organisation. The overwhelming majority, 77 per cent, claimed that it would never join the movement, 9

⁴⁹ YouGov. (2012). Retrieved June 12, 20016, from YouGov:

http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/h8vxb8d4l3/YG-Archive-221012-EDL-Toplines.pdf

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

per cent would consider to join and 1 per cent considered themselves to be a member of the EDL, 13 per cent did not know. Yet, when concerned with the EDL's values and methods, 21 per cent of the 1,282 drawn from the original sample said that they agreed with the values, but not the methods. 3 per cent claimed to agree with both values and methods, whilst the majority, almost one half, 47 per cent rejected both. Roughly one third of the 1,282 polled, 29 per cent preferred not to answer, or did not know.⁵¹ Finally, the question, from what those polled knew about the EDL, whether or not the EDL is a racist organisation was answered by 53 per cent who indeed deemed the EDL to be racist, 18 per cent rejected this notion and claimed that the EDL is in fact not racist, and again roughly one third, 28 per cent said they did not know.⁵²

4.4.2 EDL Sympathisers

Those respondents who had answered they agreed with the values and methods of the EDL were questioned further and studied specifically. The following section will discuss the findings of 39 EDL supporters compared to the full sample, starting with the social composition of both groups, see Table 3. It must be noted that although a sample of 39 may not be statistically significant, to the extent that exact conclusions on the whole population may be drawn, however the survey does offer the reader an insight into the motivations and composition of parts of the group known as the EDL. Additionally, findings by Bartlett and Littler will be discussed as well, in order to provide the reader with a broader impression about EDL supporters, their social background, and motivations, also in regards to the general UK population. Bartlett and Littler conducted a quantitative analysis, including online surveys with EDL supporters, in order to analysis the structure of the organisation and to learn more about its supporters. The data set contained 1,295 entries and were examined according to the occurrence of certain traits,

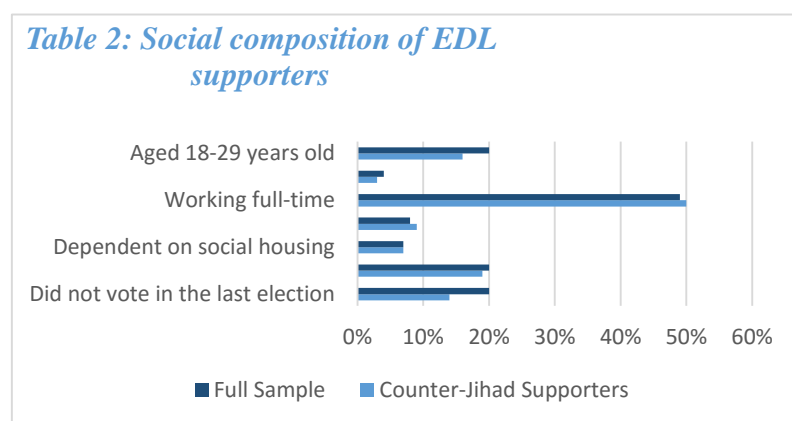
⁵¹ YouGov. (2012). Retrieved June 12, 20016, from YouGov:

http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus_uploads/document/h8vxb8d4l3/YG-Archive-221012-EDL-Toplines.pdf

⁵² *Ibid.*

compared to the general population and eventually analysed according to differences between sub-categories of EDL supporters, such as demonstrators and non-demonstrators. Their findings were backed by an analysis of the demographics of the EDL's Facebook page.

According to the YouGov survey, see Table 2, the majority of the polled EDL supporters are male (65 per cent) and 45 and older (60 per cent). Only 16 per cent of EDL supporters are between 18 and 29 years old, which may be surprising, because findings suggest that right-wing



Source: YouGov (2012)

movements appeal to young, less well-educated men.⁵³ In contrast to the results of the YouGov survey, Bartlett and Littler found that the majority, 72 per cent of EDL Facebook followers as of September

2011 were indeed under 30, the 16 to 20 year-olds being the largest group with 36 per cent, followed by 21 to 25 year-olds (24 per cent). Yet this may be partly explained by the fact that Facebook is a social network vastly used by the younger generation, hence the penetration rates are highest among those under 30.⁵⁴

Further, according to Bartlett and Littler, more than 80 per cent of the EDL supporters were male (81 per cent of the total 38,200 EDL Facebook followers were male as of September 2011, and 86 per cent of the survey respondents). The authors estimate that the EDL had a loose membership of 25,000 to 35,000 supporters based on the EDL's internet presence and this medium being its central organisational element.⁵⁵ However, it is important to note that

⁵³ YouGov. (2012). Retrieved June 12, 20016, from YouGov:

<http://cdn.yougov.com/cumulus/uploads/document/h8vxb8d4l3/YG-Archive-221012-EDL-Toplines.pdf>

⁵⁴ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. p. 17

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

identifying members of the organisation proves difficult, due to the organisation's non-traditional mobilisation technique via internet, in contrast to more traditional membership entries, such as the signing of a pledge. Because of it, a central membership list does not exist. In terms of geographical concentration (major city within 50 kilometres) of EDL supporters, unsurprisingly London ranked 1st with 27 per cent, followed by the second largest city Birmingham with 16 per cent. The authors suggest that these numbers reflect the EDL's founding to have taken place in Luton. The northern cities of Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds combine for 35 per cent of EDL followership.⁵⁶ Yet, a significant number of EDL supporters are willing to travel 100 km or more to attend rallies and protests. The survey found that 24 per cent of those polled had recently (in the last six months) undertaken said activity. Additionally, 2 per cent of the 804 polled respondents had travelled abroad. Yet, online activism supporting the EDL, 52 per cent, as well as local demonstrations, 44 per cent, generate the highest figures in terms of activities.⁵⁷

In terms of profession, the YouGov survey found that, although almost half, 48 per cent, of EDL sympathisers have a working-class background, 26 per cent skilled manual and 22 per cent semi/unskilled manual, one quarter of the EDL supporters identified as professionals/managerial, 28 per cent as routine non-manuals. Moreover, half of those polled are employed full-time, 12 per cent work part-time, 26 per cent are retired and only 3 per cent are unemployed. The unemployment rate of EDL supporters is slightly lower compared to 4 per cent in the full sample. Here, the statistics determined by Bartlett and Littler differ greatly from the ones identified by the YouGov survey. The study found, that 27.5 per cent of the 16-24 year-old and 28 per cent of the 25-64 year-old EDL sympathisers are unemployed, compared to the respective national averages of 2011 of 19.7 and 6 per cent.⁵⁸ The youth unemployment

⁵⁶ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. p. 17

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 19

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 18

has since decreased and the latest figures rate youth unemployment at 13.6 per cent, when excluding young people in full-time education the unemployment rate for 16-24 year-olds is 11.9 per cent, with the overall unemployment rate at 5 per cent.⁵⁹

In terms of education, the YouGov sample tells us that 9 per cent of EDL sympathisers do not have any educational qualifications, a figure slightly higher than the full sample figure of 8 per cent. 39 per cent obtained Secondary level education or GCSE, 13 per cent reached A-Level, 13 per cent have other post-16 qualifications and 18 per cent have a degree or a postgraduate.⁶⁰ As the highest level of education, 55 per cent of the EDL supporters polled by Bartlett and Littler stated a school qualification, 30 per cent a university or college education. Thus, the numbers found by the latter survey are slightly higher and perhaps more significant, since the sample size proved to be larger to begin with. Yet, the figures do suggest certain similarities. Additionally, 20 per cent of those polled were currently enrolled at university. According to Bartlett and Littler, the national average of higher education lies at around 45 per cent.⁶¹

The figures obtained in the YouGov survey would suggest that EDL sympathisers are not as removed from the average British citizenry as one might expect and as Table 2 above highlighted. There are slight variances noticeable, however, the results of the two groups follow the same patterns. According to the YouGov survey discussed in the Chatham House report, EDL supporters were slightly more politically active than the respondents in the full sample, 14 per cent of the EDL sympathisers had not voted at last election, compared to 20 per cent amongst the full sample.⁶²

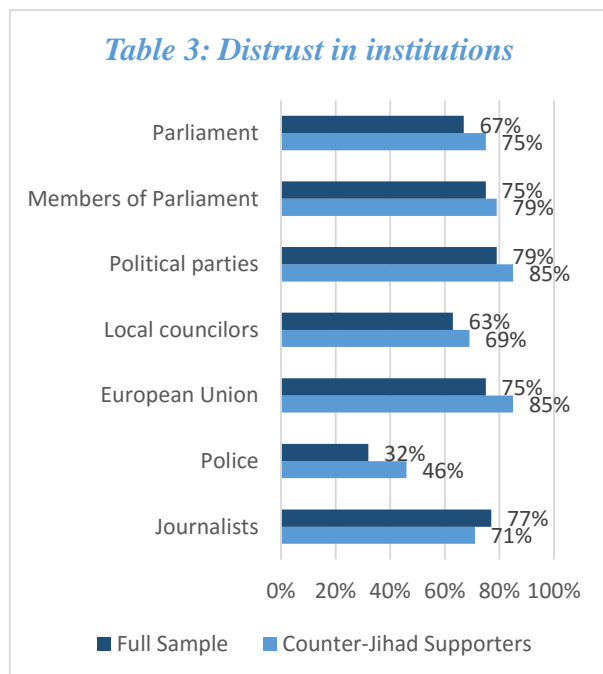
⁵⁹ Office for National Statistics. (2016). Retrieved June 15, 2016, from Office for National Statistics: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/june2016>

⁶⁰ Goodwin, M. (2013). *The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge*. Chatham House.

⁶¹ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. p. 18

⁶² Goodwin, M. (2013). *The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge*. Chatham House.

Table 3 shows the respective respondents trust in political and other institutions, such as the parliament, MPs, parties, the police, and journalists. Not surprisingly, the EDL sympathisers showed to be more distrusting of these institutions than the rest of the sample, in all categories



Source: YouGov (2012)

but journalists. Although the distrust of 71 per cent of the polled EDL supporters is rather high, given the bad press the EDL has made, one would assume the distrust would be more far-reaching. In unison with the PEGIDA movement, which has been particularly infamous for denouncing the press and journalists of lying and backing the political establishment, thus being part of the problem which is to be solved, as it will be discussed

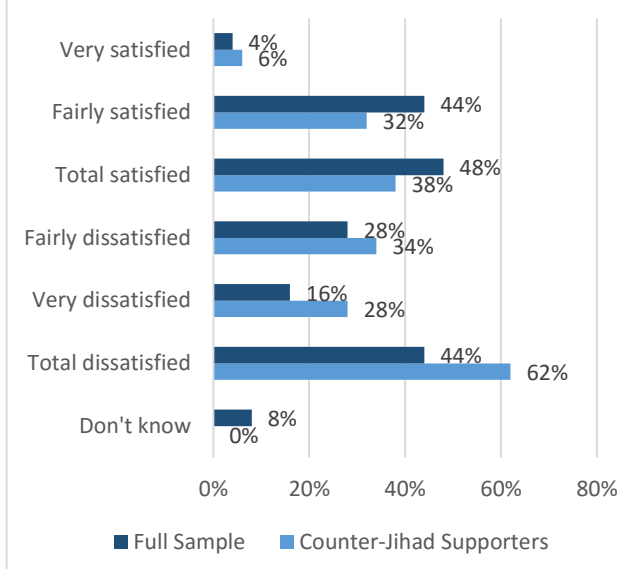
below. Both organisations, although

obviously not entirely satisfied with the political process claim to be the defendants of their respective societies, whether that entails a social, cultural or a political element. The survey conducted by Bartlett and Littler support the findings by the YouGov survey discussed in Table 3, as they note, “interestingly, the low levels of trust EDL supporters have in people [...] are not closely related to their levels of trust in social and political institutions uniformly. Although the levels of trust EDL supporters have in institutions are systematically lower than those of the general public, it is often by a small margin. The EDL supporters only report higher levels of distrust than the national average for certain institutions. Their levels of trust in political parties,

mainstream media, the army, trade unions and the EU are not markedly different from those of the general public.”⁶³

Table 4 depicts, a total of 62 per cent of EDL sympathisers are dissatisfied with the democratic system, compared to a total of 32 per cent satisfaction. As stated above, the social composition of the polled EDL sympathisers showed parallels to the average British citizen. The figures described in tables 3 and 4 however once again highlight the similarities of average citizen and EDL supporters in terms of opinions and sentiments towards democratic institutions.⁶⁴ Moreover, as Bartlett and Littler found, there is an overall sentiment of dissatisfaction with the general direction the country is moving

Table 4: Satisfaction with democracy



Source: YouGov (2012)

to, which is higher amongst EDL supporters, 88 per cent (n=1,295) of those polled believe Britain not to be on the right track, compared to 52 per cent of the general population.⁶⁵

It must thus be noted that the very sentiments that drove a particular set of people to the streets to protest alongside Tommy Robinson and the other leaders of the EDL are present amongst the British populace. Although this does not necessarily allow for the conclusion that the EDL

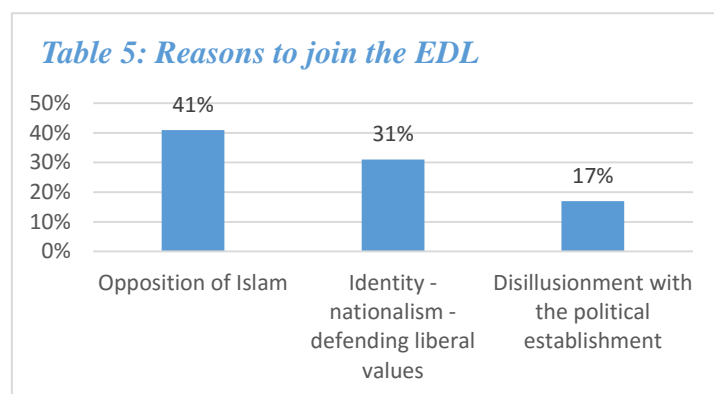
⁶³ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. p. 26

⁶⁴ Goodwin, M. (2013). *The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge*. Chatham House.

⁶⁵ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. p. 20

has wide-ranging support of the citizenry, as discussed above, the majority of those polled rejected the organisation's values and methods.

So what made people join the English Defence League? The most common answer given by 41 per cent of those polled by Bartlett et al. in an open question was that they wanted to show, what was summarised by the authors as opposition of Islam, whereas men (45%) were more likely to give this answer compared to women (28%). Some of the answers specified in regards to the perceived nature of Islam, such as political Islam or Islamic extremists, while others expressed discontent of all Muslims.⁶⁶ The second most frequent answer given by 31 per cent of the respondents was that of an identity, an emotion of pride and love towards England and thus the feeling of "commitment to preserving traditional national and cultural values, and belief in representing the interests of 'real' countrymen."⁶⁷ The sense that something, specifically liberal values need to be protected does of course require a force from which it needs protection of, in this case, among others but especially relevant, the perceived threat of Islam, or rather the Islamisation of Britain. As the EDL has clearly expressed, the Islamisation is to be prevented, which resonates greatly amongst its members.



Source: Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011).

The third most important reason for the polled EDL supporters to join the EDL was the in parts already discussed in the section above disillusionment with the political establishment, the elites and

⁶⁶ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. p. 27

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

institutions, including the media and the general direction the country was heading. 17 per cent of the respondents gave that answer.⁶⁸

In order to be able to shine light on what drives people out on the street to support the EDL, Bartlett and Littler compared what they called demonstrators and non-demonstrators, their demographics, social political views, motivations, personal values, including measures of pessimism and optimism, and again a confidence in institution, in detail the police and the justice legal system. The findings are interesting, especially in addition with the general inferences that the authors have drawn about the demonstrators.

Table 6: Comparison of EDL demonstrators and non-demonstrators

| | EDL demonstrators | EDL non-demonstrators |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Female | 27% | 20% |
| Age below 30 | 73% | 63% |
| Consider themselves members of the EDL | 88% | 61% |
| Education at University level | 42% | 48% |
| Unemployment rate | 20% | 25% |
| Pessimism about future | 52% | 39% |
| Value of security | 43% | 32% |
| Value for human life | 19% | 28% |
| Distrust in the police | 70% | 56% |
| Distrust in the justice and legal system | 81% | 70% |

Source: Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011).

As we can see, those EDL demonstrators polled, displayed a larger share of female protesters (27% > 20%), were younger in comparison (73% > 63% under 30), a vast majority considered

⁶⁸ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. pp. 27-28

themselves to be members of the EDL (88% > 61%), were less educated on university level (42% < 48%), yet were less likely to be unemployed (20% < 25%), showed more pessimism about the future (52% > 39%), a higher value of security (43% > 32%), less regard towards human life (19% < 28%) and more distrust in the institutions of police (70% > 56%) and the justice and legal system (81% > 70%) than their non-demonstrating counterparts.⁶⁹

According to Bartlett and Littler, the most significant factor for driving a demonstrator out on the street was the sentiment of pessimism about Britain's future. "If a respondent disagreed with the statement that 'the UK is on the right track', there was a 68 per cent increase in the likelihood of them demonstrating"⁷⁰. Additionally, the authors state that an agreement with the statement that 'the next 12 months will be worse than the last 12 months' increased the demonstration potential by 41 per cent. The lack of trust in the justice and legal system increased the likelihood of demonstration by 43 per cent, whereas the lack of trust in the police increased said likelihood by 57 per cent. A lack of trust in the government and in the media 'only' increased the likelihood of demonstration by 22 and 23 per cent respectively. Surprisingly, a belief in the acceptance of violence only led to a 7 per cent increase in the likelihood of demonstration, whereas age had the expected affect. When controlling for demographics and a range of attitudinal covariates, EDL supporters under 30 are 57 per cent likely to demonstrate.⁷¹

4.5 SPREAD ACROSS EUROPE AND THE ORGANISATION'S DECLINE

The idea of forming defence leagues proved quite popular in Europe, and defence leagues sprouted in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, among others. The Norwegian Defence League made headlines after the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Anders

⁶⁹ Bartlett, J., Littler, M. (2011). *Inside the EDL. Populist Politics in a Digital Age*. Demos. pp. 29-30

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 30

⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 31

Behring Breivik in Oslo and on Utøya in 2011, killing 77 people. Breivik joined the NDL in 2010, although NDL leadership distanced themselves from the attacks and his persona, claiming he was thrown out of the organisation, because his views were “too extreme”.⁷² During the course of the investigations into Breivik, allegations were made against the leadership of the EDL to have met Breivik in person at a Geert Wilders speech in London prior to the attacks and interacted with him online, as he reached out to like-minded people in far-right and anti-Muslim online forums. Breivik could have been inspired by Paul Ray, as the Telegraph suggested, and as Ray himself recognised similarities between Breivik’s manifesto and his own blog *Lionheart*, “It does worry me that he got inspiration from my blog and it does look that way,” Ray said, “But what he did was pure evil. I could never use what he has done to further my own beliefs.”⁷³ Tommy Robinson denied accusations brought forward by another EDL member numerous times, while also appearing to express comprehension for the actions of Breivik on other occasions. Whether or not an alliance between Breivik and the EDL was forged, the allegations had a negative impact on the public perception of the EDL.

Evidently, the EDL’s agenda resonated across Europe’s far-right activists and was noted in the United States as well. Apart from the aforementioned forming of defence leagues in Germany, the Netherlands and other European countries, the above mentioned meetings in Scandinavia, at Aarhus and Stockholm, are the manifestation of a decentralised international network of like-minded movements, seeking to internationalise the Counter-Jihad movement. Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun state that instead of using the term “leaderless resistance”, the movements chose to function as a “distributed network”, preventing the network’s exposure of a weak link within their movement, due to the lack of ‘a set command and control hierarchy.’ This being the case, “the model can be applied to multiple Counter-Jihad groups and individuals in

⁷² Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2)

⁷³ Rayner, G., & Holehouse, M. (2011, July 30). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved May 29, 2016, from The Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/norway/8670685/Norway-attacks-Is-the-man-who-inspired-Breivik-a-Briton.html>

different countries and regions, allowing them to act relatively independently of one another while pursuing the same overarching strategy and agenda.”⁷⁴ This partly explains the spread of defence leagues across Europe on the one hand, as well as it offers an explanation for the relative success of PEGIDA on the other. These individual movements are connected mainly through channels such as the internet, act independently, and yet are part of a larger movement. Thus, one movement can act as an inspiration to others, lending its name, ideas, agenda and often reputation. By adopting an organisation’s nametag, it is made clear that there is a general agreement with the ideals of the original movement, may it be the English Defence League or PEGIDA. The offshoots align themselves with those goals in the broader sense, embedded in a broader social movement, while simultaneously pursuing regional and local agendas. Interestingly, former EDL leader Yaxley-Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson co-founded PEGIDA UK in 2015, after leaving the EDL in 2013 to work with the Muslim-led think tank Quilliam. In recent interviews, it becomes evident that his attitude towards the perceived threat of Islamisation and the rise of radical Islam has not changed, but rather he seems to have acknowledged that the outlook of the EDL and the tactics utilised were not prone to succeed on a larger (middle-class)-scale. Robinson became rather well-known and was ultimately the face of the EDL until his departure in 2013, returned to the public’s attention by announcing the formation of PEGIDA UK alongside Anne Marie Waters, also the leader of an organisation called Sharia Watch and Paul Weston, a former UKIP and British Freedom Party member and now leader of the political party Liberty GB.⁷⁵

The latest, most notable EDL protest was staged in the town of Preston on 20 February 2016. However, the turnout of 150 to 200 protesters was rather small, underlining the organisation’s

⁷⁴ Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., & Brun, H. (2013). *A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Movement*. London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), pp. 22-23

⁷⁵ Dearden, L. (2016, February 5). *The Independent*. Retrieved July 10, 2016, from The Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/former-ukip-candidate-and-pegida-uk-leader-paul-weston-says-muslims-should-not-hold-political-power-a6856086.html>

inability to mobilise significant numbers. It seems as though the British far-right is splintered into various groups, the biggest of them arguably being the political party Britain First, which is able to attract more than 1.4m followers on Facebook as of June 2016, compared to the 300,000 followers of the EDL and around 11,000 PEGIDA UK.⁷⁶ There seems to be a disunity on the means of how to achieve the goal that connects all, or most of the far-right groups, may it be the EDL, Britain First or PEGIDA UK.

5 PEGIDA

5.1 INITIATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Whereas the EDL was founded in 2009 in Luton, England, the PEGIDA movement originated from Dresden in 2014. Despite predictions by various scholars that PEGIDA would fade into nothingness, or rather supporters would jump on the bandwagon of right-wing populist parties, such as the AfD, the movement is yet able to mobilise enough followers to attend their so-called ‘evening strolls’ Monday to Monday at Dresden, as well as form branches in other cities across Germany and Europe. The organisation released a 19-point program in which the central points of its agenda are formulated. The foundation of PEGIDA and AfD do not entail a vacancy of right-wing groups and parties, however these very peculiar times of crises, such as the financial breakdown and the vast refugee flow into Europe, allowed these movements to flourish and gain support. Nonetheless, there are a variety of predecessors to these organisations, the ‘Pro’-

⁷⁶ Facebook - Britain First. (2016). Retrieved June 16, 2016, from Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritainFirst/>
 Facebook - PEGIDA UK. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PegidaUKOfficial/>
 Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

Facebook - EDL official. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EnglishDefenceLeagueOFFICIAL/timeline>

Remark: there is several facebook pages who claim to be the only official EDL page

movement, of course the NPD and other more or less regional far-right parties and social movements, just to name a few. Yet, the success, the rapid rise of PEGIDA, as aforementioned, across Germany and Europe just weeks after its foundation in the city of Dresden, does raise the question why PEGIDA is so appealing to a part of the German society? How are the organisers able to preserve the outlook of the “worried citizens”⁷⁷ protesting the alleged loss of Western cultural values, while at the same time rallying with well-known far-right activists and Hooligans among others?

PEGIDA came into existence as a street protest movement on 13 October 2014 in Dresden. The foundation as an association followed almost exactly one month later on the 14th of November and its inclusion into the official register yet again another month later on 19 December 2014. Initially a secret group on the social media website Facebook, the members of said group decided to voice their frustrations on the street and organised the first PEGIDA demonstration in Dresden on 20 October 2014, attended, according to Police statistics, by roughly 350 people. Yet, the movement was able to establish itself quite quickly and widened its support to around 1,000 demonstrators just three weeks later. These figures rose to 10,000 on 8 December 2014, reaching the movement’s preliminary climax one month later with acclaimed 25,000 attendees, although other sources speak of 12,000 or even 18,000 protesters.⁷⁸ This demonstration on 12 January 2015 marks the peak of PEGIDA in Dresden and any other German city thus far. The first months of 2015 were so to speak marked by the first crisis the movement had to face. Up until January 2015, the members of the so-called ‘*Orga-Team*’, the organisational circle, as well as ordinary PEGIDA supporters had been characterised by a complete refusal to talk to members of the press and media. In fact, PEGIDA did not make a secret of its perception of the press, repeatedly chanting ‘*Lügenpresse*’ (‘lying press’), in itself a clear connection to the Third

⁷⁷ German description of PEGIDA protesters sees them as “Wutbürger” (enraged citizen), as well as “besorgte Bürger” (worried citizen)

⁷⁸ *Durchgezählt*. (2016). Retrieved from *Durchgezählt*: <http://durchgezaehlt.org/pegida-dresden-statistik/>

Reich rhetoric. This refusal was eventually lifted on the 18th of January when Kathrin Oertel, one of the initiators of PEGIDA and members of the Orga-Team accepted an invitation to a talk show, an appearance that sparked harsh critique across the German public and media. The scheduled PEGIDA rally the day following the infamous TV appearance of Katrin Oertel was cancelled in the light of the terrorist attacks in Paris and terror warnings across Europe, as well as unspecified threats to PEGIDA leader Lutz Bachmann. The following PEGIDA rally a week later was met by a large number of counter-protesters who had gathered in as part of a music festival organised by prominent German artists, in order to oppose the PEGIDA protests. This music festival was attended by roughly 22,000 people, outnumbering the 17,000 PEGIDA supporters.⁷⁹ Despite the still massive turnout, PEGIDA's inner circle were faced with public criticism, especially aimed at Lutz Bachmann, as well as inner disputes concerned with offshoots of PEGIDA, namely LEGIDA based in Leipzig. The demonstrations in Leipzig were noticeably traversed by radical right-wing individuals and groups and at times turned violent, opposing the self-given image by PEGIDA to be a peaceful social movement. Thus, Lutz Bachmann attempted to certify other offshoot organisations in other cities under the original PEGIDA Dresden. An attempt met by criticism, which led to internal ideological divisions. The aforementioned criticism aimed at Lutz Bachmann stemmed from his criminal background, a photograph of him posing as Adolf Hitler which he had posted in a secret group online, as well as comments, or rather racial slurs he used in regards to refugees and immigrants in said secret group. As a result of public criticism and internal division amongst the Orga-team, the inner circle eventually dissolved between 25 and 27 January 2015. Former members of the organisational circle, including Katrin Oertel founded a new movement called 'Direkte Demokratie für Europa' ('Direct Democracy for Europe' – DDfE) not long after the dissolution of PEGIDA's 'Orga-team'. Leaders of the DDfE let it be known that it does not want to offer

⁷⁹ Rucht, P. (2015). "Pegida & Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens", Arbeitskreis Bürgergesellschaft und Demokratie. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. 41, p. 8

opposition to PEGIDA, due to overlapping goals of the organisations, yet want to achieve them via different means, also criticising PEGIDA to offer a platform to NPD supporters. The new organisation staged their first rally attended by around 500 supporters on 8 February 2015. The second protest on 19 February 2015 was only attended by roughly 100 protesters.⁸⁰ The two leading figures Katrin Oertel and Rene Jahn declared their departure from DDfE on 9 March 2015.⁸¹

Despite the division of the inner circle, PEGIDA did not cease to exist, continuing their presence on the streets of Dresden in February 2015, with 2,000 attendees.⁸² Rucht notes the division of the ‘Orga-team’ left a “hard, explicitly xenophobic, radical right-wing and racist”, which remained with PEGIDA and a more “moderate, citizen-oriented, populist and ‘pro-democratic’ soft core”, founding a new movement. As he predicted, the former will continue with its agenda, trying to expand German-, if not European-wide, whereas the latter will eventually cease to exist, because of programmatic and organisational difficulties and because demands for ‘more democracy’ are at the core of leftist groupings, in which they are backed by well-educated base and which are unlikely to support right-wing populist movement.⁸³ Therefore, PEGIDA underwent a shift from alleged citizen-oriented, middle-class protest movement, to a more explicit and articulated right-wing establishment. Yet, as the numbers suggests, PEGIDA, despite predictions by various scholars has not ceased to exist, still able to mobilise a substantial amount of support, whether it be online or on the streets.

⁸⁰ *Berliner Zeitung*. (2015, February 19). Retrieved April 30, 2016, from *Berliner Zeitung*: <http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik/-direkte-demokratie-fuer-europa--nur-100-menschen-kommen-zu-kundgebung-von-pegida-abtruennigen-1251106>

Der Spiegel. (2015, February 9). Retrieved April 30, 2016, from *Der Spiegel*: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-kathrin-oertels-verein-direkte-demokratie-fuer-europa-floppt-a-1017403.html>

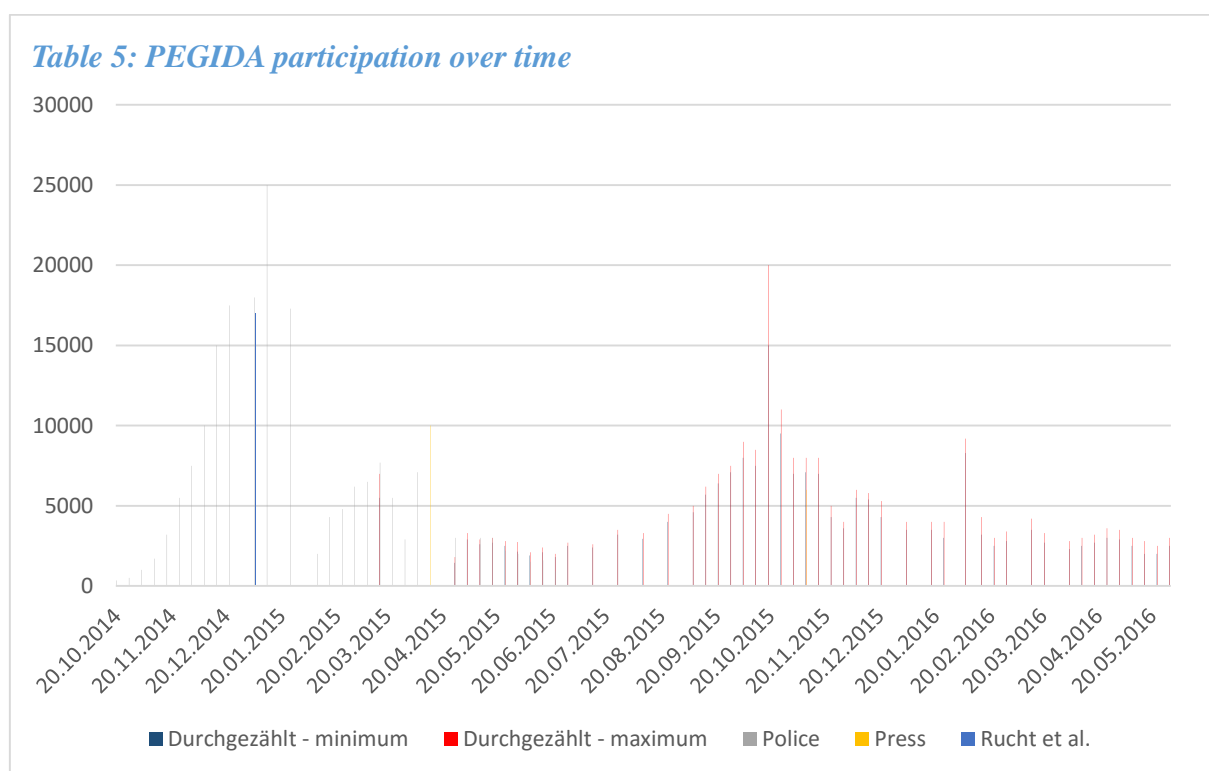
⁸¹ *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk*. (2015, March 11). Retrieved April 30, 2016, from MDR: <http://www.mdr.de/sachsen/dresden/oertel-jahn-ausstieg-ddfe100.html>

⁸² *Durchgezählt*. (2016). Retrieved from *Durchgezählt*: <https://durchgezaehlt.org/>

⁸³ Rucht, P. (2015). “Pegida & Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens”, Arbeitskreis Bürgergesellschaft und Demokratie. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. 41, p. 7

As the figures suggest, PEGIDA was generally not able to reach more than 17,000 supporters again, except for the maximum estimates, see Table 5, on October 19 2015, the one-year anniversary of the organisation. Yet, the movement generated continuing support for its cause.

The refusal to talk to the Press is in a sense shared by both organisations in regards to the leadership. During the first few months the EDL came into existence, the people behind the organisation kept in the background, until G. Singh, Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carrol spoke to the press and gave interviews. As noted before, especially Tommy Robinson became active in public, in order to explain the EDL's justification of existence.



Source: *Durchgezählt*. (2016).

5.2 MOTIVES

The motives of PEGIDA appear to be clear at first. The position paper released by the organisation, present the claims formulated by the organisational circle and arguably backed by their followers. In this 19-point paper, PEGIDA states that it supports “the intake of refugees

who flee from war and political or religious persecution”, that refugees are to be distributed amongst the members of the European Union, that the process of the German asylum procedure is reformed according to the Dutch or the Swiss model and also its longitude is shortened to ensure quicker integration. In general, the process of immigration is ought to be reformed after the Swiss, Australian, Canadian or the South African model. Moreover, PEGIDA demands more state funding for the German police forces, the enforcement of given laws regarding asylum and deportation, a ‘zero-tolerance-policy’ towards delinquent asylum seekers and migrants. The organisation supports resistance to a “misogynous, violent political ideology”, here Islam, yet relativizes this statement by claiming not to support resistance to “resident and integrating Muslims.” A very central point on PEGIDA’s agenda, and also part of the organisation’s name is the “preservation and protection of the Judo-Christian” culture of the occident. Parallel societies with accompanying features, such as Sharia courts, the infamous ‘Sharia police’ and so-called peace-judges are opposed and ought to be prevented. “PEGIDA opposes radicalism, whether it is religiously or politically motivated” and finally, hatemongers and preachers of hate, no matter their affiliation.⁸⁴ These principles may sound appealing to parts of the German population. The organisation claims to be anti-racist and anti-xenophobic, and just taking into account the position paper, this claim might stand true, yet according to the authors research, PEGIDA members, such Tatjana Festerling, member of the organisational committee and regular speaker at PEGIDA rallies, refers to refugees as ‘invaders’ and views the refugee crisis as an orchestrated invasion to infiltrate Europe and eventually impose Sharia law. The xenophobic, sometimes racist and definitely anti-Islamic sentiment PEGIDA voices and supports is often found in between the lines and more often voiced during speeches at rallies, however, this does not seem to impede PEGIDA’s popularity, or drive away a large amount of middle class citizens attending the protests. Could this suggest that either racism is

⁸⁴ PEGIDA. (2014). PEGIDA Positionspapier. Dresden, Sachsen, Deutschland.

more prevalent within the German society than prior expected, or that ordinary people voice use this platform to voice their fears and worries with the political establishment in regards to the present situation? Perhaps, it is a mixture of both, and although PEGIDA and its followers do not represent the whole of the German population, this phenomenon is worth of analysis and political attention. It also raises attention to the political elites and decision-makers and scrutiny of such, since a part of the German population feel that decisions, which some view as harmful to the local citizenry, are made over their heads.

5.3 MEDIA AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION

One of the phenomena attributed to PEGIDA in the literature was its coverage by the German and international media, politicians and the public in general. As Rucht argues, PEGIDA has garnered more coverage than it deserves, especially by the media and leading politicians, which in turn could have contributed to the success and the presence of the movement.⁸⁵ To him, the constant media coverage was unjustified in regards to the numbers that PEGIDA mobilised. Yet, De Genova argues that “the rapid rise of PEGIDA in late 2014/ early 2015 commands sober attention.”⁸⁶

The people and organisations behind the various counter-protests and the people that attended these felt an obligation to take a stand and oppose a right-wing movement such as PEGIDA. This underlines the impact that the movement had and still has in Germany on the political discourse. In combination with political issues such as Islamic terrorism and the refugee crisis, the German society seems to be heavily polarised, often circumventing sober discussion about highly sensitive topics such as the aforementioned. German society is split into ‘*Gutmenschen*’

⁸⁵ Rucht, P. (2015). “Pegida & Co. – Aufstieg und Fall eines populistischen Unternehmens”, Arbeitskreis Bürgergesellschaft und Demokratie. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. betrifft: Bürgergesellschaft. 41, p. 7

⁸⁶ Genova, N. D. (2015). In the Land of the Setting Sun - Reflections on “Islamization” and “Patriotic Europeanism”. *movements. Journal für kritische Migrations- und Grenzregimeforschung*, 1(2). Retrieved from <http://movements-journal.org/issues/02.kaempfe/15.de-genova-pegidaislamization-patriotic-europeanism.html>

(ironic: “good-mind”) and ‘*Wutbürger*’ (ironic: “angry citizen”), to exaggerate, in times in which every citizen seems to have an opinion, or rather seems to be pressured into taking a stand, simplified by the use of social media and other forums of discussion. This signals a challenge to the German society and political establishment, and this conflict is argued out and evident within the German middle-class. Traditionally regarded to be the base of democracy, the middle-class may produce its own radicalisation if it feels threatened. Though, in the light of recent years, European societies, including the middle-classes have arguably faced a series of challenges ranging from financial crises, thus the threat of economic loss, to the perceived threat of Islamic terrorism and the refugee crisis and the perceived threat of social and cultural nature. The German middle-class is still the foundational footing on which its democracy is based, but resentments and authoritarian mind-sets are no longer alienated from it.⁸⁷ The fear of a worsening situation for oneself, an acute anxiety of social and political decline, as Germany, as a ‘*Volk*’⁸⁸, as the occident as a whole, subverted by Muslims who eventually are aiming to take over. Reoccurring features and rhetoric of PEGIDA demonstrations, as well as those by the AfD and other right-wing organisations which fan fear into the German society, into its core, as well as its periphery.

As pointed out before, PEGIDA officially accepts the notion of welcoming ‘real’ refugees, those fleeing from war, political and religious prosecution, however it cynically condemns the German ‘welcoming culture’ and those who stand for it, foremost chancellor Angela Merkel. The reasoning that Europe ‘cannot take everyone’ resonates across parts of the German society.

⁸⁷ Nachtwey, O. (2015). “Rechte Wutbürger Pegida oder das autoritäre Syndrom”, *Blätter für Deutsche und International Politik*. 60(3), p. 85

⁸⁸ German for people or nation

5.4 WHO GOES TO PEGIDA AND WHY? – PEGIDA SYMPATHISERS

Vorländer et al., in their book ‘Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum?’, surveyed demonstrators at three PEGIDA rallies in December 2014 and January 2015, inquiring their age, sex, education, profession, income, religious affiliation, party affiliation, frequency of attendance, origin and their motivation to attend PEGIDA demonstrations. 64.1 per cent of 1,106 asked refused cooperation, leaving 397 polled PEGIDA protesters. The analysis by Vorländer and his colleagues was the first one to inquire the PEGIDA phenomena at that stage of its development. The scholars thus focused on the composition of attendees and their motivations to attend the PEGIDA demonstrations, in order to offer a sociodemographic image of this social movement.

The general assumption that right-wing protest movements and organisations feed on the disenfranchised and ill-educated youth, faced with economic hardship and a lack of perspective may be contradicted by the analysis undertaken by various German scholars. According to their findings, the average PEGIDA supporter is relatively well educated, middle-aged, middle-class citizen, whereas men are overrepresented.⁸⁹ The typical PEGIDA goer is between 44 and 48 years old, a substantial amount hold a university degree, according to various studies these figures range from 28 to 40 per cent. The majority of PEGIDA protesters belong to the liberal-conservative camp and prefer the AfD over the classic liberal and conservative choices such as FDP and CDU. According to Decker, 76 per cent of AfD voters voice understanding of PEGIDA demonstrators, compared to just 21 per cent of all voters and 36 per cent of non-voters.⁹⁰

According to Vorländer et al. the vast majority, 74.6 per cent of the protesters polled were men. 18.9 per cent were between 40 and 49 years old, whereas the 50-59 year-olds made up 18.1 per cent. 5 per cent left school after 8 years of education, thus acquired a ‘Hauptschulabschluss’

⁸⁹ Decker, F. (2015). “Pegida. Die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft”, *Gesellschaft • Wirtschaft • Politik (GWP)*, 2, p. 298

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

according to the German system, the most basic school degree. 38 per cent of those polled held a high-school diploma (Realschulabschluss – completed after 10 years of education), 16.4 per cent had the higher education entrance qualification, 28.2 per cent had acquired a university degree or completed vocational academy. A further 8.6 per cent of those polled had completed apprenticeships. According Vorländer et al. the high share of academics is remarkable, because if compared to the results of the micro-census of 2013, their share doubles the German average of 14.7 per cent, although it is noted that the data is limitedly comparable. Moreover, those who acquire the higher education entrance qualification usually continue at university.⁹¹

In regards to occupation of the respondents, Vorländer et al. found that 47.6 per cent of those polled are workers and employees, 20.4 per cent stated to be self-employed, 17.6 per cent were pensioners and 8.8 per cent students, apprentices and pupils. Only 2.8 per cent of those polled stated to be officials. Noticeable here are the low percentage, 2 per cent, of those unemployed, or rather seeking work, when compared to the 8.4 per cent unemployment rate in the free state of Saxony and 7.9 per cent in its capital Dresden.⁹²

The findings of Vorländer et al. are especially interesting when religious affiliation is concerned, because PEGIDA claims to be defending the Judo-Christian tradition of the West. 71.8 per cent of those polled stated not to have any religious affiliation, 21.2 per cent identified as Protestants, whereas only 3.8 per cent said to be Catholics and 2.3 per cent indicated ‘other’. The findings are virtually precise representation of religious affiliation of Saxony.⁹³

As noted above, PEGIDA protesters prefer the AfD over the other political parties. However, 62.1 per cent stated not to have any party affiliations. 16.8 per cent of those polled affiliated with the AfD, 8.9 per cent with the CDU, 3.7 per cent with the NPD and 3 per cent with the German Left. The other major parties, SPD, the Greens and the liberal FDP were marginalised.

⁹¹ Vorländer, H., Herold, M., Schaller, S. (2015). “Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum? Eine empirische Untersuchung von PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden”, *Schriften zur Verfassungs- und Demokratieforschung*, pp. 45-46

⁹² *Ibid.* p. 46

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 50-51

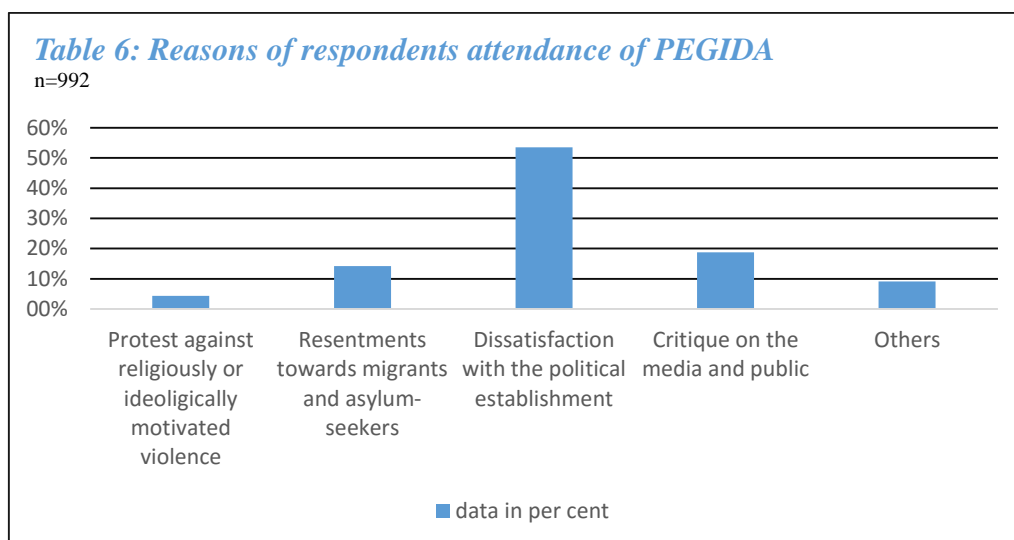
The question of party affiliation was aimed at the respondents subjective identification with a particular party, its programmatic aims and democratic representation aspirations.⁹⁴

Naturally, one can have multiple reasons to attend a PEGIDA rally, as Vorländer et al note, on average 2.5. The motivations on why to support PEGIDA however do not necessarily allow for drawing conclusions about the political attitude of the respondents, yet offer an insight about motivations and protest aims. With 53.5 per cent, Vorländer et al. found that dissatisfaction with the political establishment is the main reason for supporting PEGIDA as of 2015. Followed by critique towards the media and public, 18.8 per cent, prejudice towards migrants, 14.2 per cent and finally to protest against ideologically or religiously motivated violence with 4.4 per cent. Broken down, 71.3 per cent of the respondents stated dissatisfaction with the political establishment to be one of the reasons for their PEGIDA support, again followed by the critique towards the media and the public with 34.5 per cent. 32.2 per cent of those polled stated that prejudice towards migrants is one of the reasons of support, and 10.3 per cent also answered that they are there, because of a protest against ideological or religious violence.⁹⁵ Noteworthy to the author are that around a third stated that prejudice and resentments towards migrants and asylum-seekers are valid motivations to support PEGIDA as a social movement. Also, the low support for the latter, the opposition of religiously motivated violence, is striking, due to its central entrenchment in PEGIDA's agenda, and because the survey was carried out days after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris and the PEGIDA march was thus advertised as a march in remembrance of the victims.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Vorländer, H., Herold, M., Schäller, S. (2015). "Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum? Eine empirische Untersuchung von PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden", *Schriften zur Verfassungs- und Demokratieforschung*, pp. 51-52

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 58-59

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 59



Source: Vorländer, H., Herold, M., & Schäller, S. (2015).

The figures suggest what other studies have shown and what seems to be the main motivation for supporting populist movements and parties, the dissatisfaction with politicians, the government, in short, the political establishment. Henke et al. attribute populism, in this case right-wing populism to occur during the times of crisis, in which a cleavage between the general population and the political and social elite is most evident, in turn stemming from disturbances in the communication between these groups. The political elites in Germany, most notably the two major parties, CDU and SPD have undergone a process of convergence and consensus in central aspects of politics in recent years, which left citizens deprived of the opportunity to channel their critic and frustrations.⁹⁷ Chancellor Merkel, in office for more than a decade by now, has pushed policies traditionally not attributed to the Conservative party. Thus, parts of the German electorate feel misrepresented, or not represented at all. The reoccurring chant ‘Wir sind das Volk’ (‘We are the people’) underlines the dissatisfaction of PEGIDA protesters with the political establishment, as well as it entails a claim to be representing the German people as a whole. The last time this chant echoed through German cities, it stood for the removal of the socialist regime of the German Democratic Republic and voiced the demand for more political

⁹⁷ Nachtwey, O. (2015). “Rechte Wutbürger Pegida oder das autoritäre Syndrom”, *Blätter für Deutsche und International Politik*. 60(3), p. 83

participation, and eventually led to the reunification of the formerly divided states of East and West. Hence, it could be interpreted as the comparison of the current German government and state as a whole with the unjust regime of the GDR. Thus, the case of PEGIDA and its supporters highlights the discrepancy between the political elite and the citizens. The citizens feel 'left alone' by a withdrawn and arrogant elite which has lost its sense of its citizen's social realities. In detail, those polled claimed, apart from a general dissatisfaction with politics (20.4 per cent), 25.9 per cent, more than a quarter of the respondents claimed dissatisfaction with the German asylum-policy, 17.1 per cent with the German immigration and integration policies, 5.8 per cent with the foreign and security policies, 7.6 per cent with the economic and social policies, as well as 21.2 per cent a more general dissatisfaction with the political system of Germany. Adding to it, there is a substantial amount of sentiment of, and critique towards the general distance between the citizenry and politicians, amounting to 25.9 per cent, again more than a quarter of those polled.⁹⁸

Decker suggests that insecurity and discomfort or discontent are the core motives for protest. Insecurity here refers to one's social situation, the concern about loss of wealth, about a perceived threat of downward social mobility, whilst discontent is generated by cultural estrangement, the deprivation of familiar cultural and social ties and orders.⁹⁹ According to Vorländer et al., 15.4 per cent of those polled stated that they had resentments towards Islam and Muslims. In detail, the respondents criticised the religious way of life, including Islamic food laws, and the 'backward' relation of Muslims towards religion, the state, justice and tolerance. Although only a minority voiced concerns about social decline, 7.6 per cent, the

⁹⁸ Vorländer, H., Herold, M., Schäler, S. (2015). "Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum? Eine empirische Untersuchung von PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden", *Schriften zur Verfassungs- und Demokratieforschung*. pp. 62-63

⁹⁹ Decker, F. (2015). "Pegida. Die schmutzige Seite der Zivilgesellschaft", *Gesellschaft • Wirtschaft • Politik (GWP)*, 2, p. 299

answers given by those polled indicate a belief that immigrants abuse the German social welfare system, and are treated preferably over Germans.¹⁰⁰

As noted, the belief that a mass migration is orchestrated might be overstated, however, an anxiety over the loss of cultural and social norms is evident, and drives people into the right-wing populist traps of PEGIDA, AfD and EDL for that matter. Stories about no-go areas, present in both Germany and the UK, in which Germans, Britons, so to speak non-Muslims cannot take a step, are spread on social media and blogs and add to the feeling of alienation of parts of the society. As Andre remarks, “growing economic and social difficulties in Europe have witnessed the rise of cultural intolerance and extremist nationalism and a shift to the right across the continent.”¹⁰¹ This entails the emergence of Muslim communities, which have sparked a debate about immigration and integration, as well as national identities and core values. “Secular norms and identities in the mid-20th century were perceived as an important mechanism for integrating diverse populations into a common political framework. (...) Furthermore, secularism was seen as providing a basis of citizenship that was not rooted in a particular religious identity.”¹⁰² Yet, the question whether Islam belongs to Germany has been heavily discussed by politicians and the public and was recently reignited as the AfD remarked that Islam and the German Basic Law are incompatible.¹⁰³ The debate is long on-going and underlines the inability by policy-makers to effectively integrate and accommodate changes arising from post-war immigration, “by seeking to simply minimize or limit expressions of Islam in the public sphere.”¹⁰⁴ Pressured by worried societies, governments across Europe “are imposing policies that are increasingly restrictive in order to limit incoming flows of migrants

¹⁰⁰ Vorländer, H., Herold, M., Schäller, S. (2015). “Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum? Eine empirische Untersuchung von PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden”, *Schriften zur Verfassungs- und Demokratieforschung*, p. 70

¹⁰¹ Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2), p. 188

¹⁰² Hibbard, S. 2010. *Religious Politics and Secular States: Egypt, India and the United States*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

¹⁰³ *Tagesschau*. (2016, April 17). Retrieved June 21, 2016, from Tagesschau: <http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/afd-257.html>

¹⁰⁴ Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2), p. 188

and refugees whilst at the same time advocating greater tolerance towards foreigners.”¹⁰⁵ Yet, xenophobic sentiments spread across the continent, as well as the sentiment of Muslims that their culture is being rejected. “This cultural exclusion is providing fertile soil for Islamophobia to flourish and a springboard for both right-wing and Islamist extremist mobilization”.¹⁰⁶ This is not to say that PEGIDA supporters are generally extremists, as aforementioned, the average PEGIDA demonstrator is a relatively well-educated, middle-aged, middle-class man, yet, the movement represents a notion of the worried European societies mentioned above. The sentiment of cultural nationalism has become evident in Germany, a country with historic difficulties in voicing national pride and patriotism.

The PEGIDA movement was born in a city with remarkably low proportion of immigrants, and especially interesting in the case of PEGIDA, Muslims. The share of immigrants who live in the free state of Saxony is 2.2 per cent, whereas Dresden reaches 4.7 per cent of people without a German passport. 5 per cent of all people in Saxony have a migratory background.¹⁰⁷ Concerning Muslims, these figures amount to 0.1 per cent for the whole of Saxony, corresponding to roughly 4000 as a whole.¹⁰⁸ Yet, the fact that xenophobia is often most evident in places where few foreigners live is not necessarily a new discovery, but became once more obvious with the arrival and success of PEGIDA in Dresden and Leipzig. That is not to say that the other parts of Germany are free of xenophobia, Islamophobia and racism, however PEGIDA Dresden is considered to be the core of the PEGIDA movement and moreover plainly the most successful one. Yet, as the research of Vorländer et al. finds, 39.9 per cent of the respondents were Dresden residents, 41.3 per cent of those polled residing in the rest of Saxony, excluding Dresden, 9.4 per cent came from East Germany, apart from Saxony, and 6.4 per cent attendees

¹⁰⁵ Andre, V. (2015, April 02). Merah and Breivik: A Reflection of the European. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26(2), p. 188

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Sachsen*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 15, 2016, from Sachsen: <http://www.willkommen.sachsen.de/28439.htm>

¹⁰⁸ *Der Spiegel*. (2014, December 12). Retrieved June 1, 2016, from Der Spiegel: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-die-thesen-im-faktencheck-a-1008098.html>

came from the West of Germany. Underlining that PEGIDA is not necessarily solely a phenomena restricted to Dresden, but incorporates people from the rest of Saxony and other parts of Germany.¹⁰⁹

The physical attendance at PEGIDA and similar rallies organised by offshoots of the original Dresden-based protest movement is one element of support for their cause. Another, and much more far-reaching one is internet presence, especially PEGIDA's official Facebook page, on which the organisers share their views and details about protests and information about the organisation, and which still attracts a considerable amount of followers. According to Rucht et al., on 20 February 2015, the organisation had roughly 160.000 'likes', the authors own investigation found that this number had risen to roughly 193.000 in January 2016, and has risen once more to roughly 203.000 as of June 2016.¹¹⁰ These figures are an indication for a wide-ranging support, as well as people's willingness to identify themselves with the goals of PEGIDA. Moreover, the University of Leipzig has found that although 49.5 per cent of the 2,405 survey participants did not agree with the aims of PEGIDA, 13.6 per cent partially agree and 9 per cent who totally agree with the organisations motives.¹¹¹ Although, almost one half of the respondents did not agree or tended not to agree with PEGIDA, the indication that over one fifth of the German population did so, highlights a significant popularity of populist movements.

¹⁰⁹ Vorländer, H., Herold, M., Schäller, S. (2015). "Wer geht zu PEGIDA und warum? Eine empirische Untersuchung von PEGIDA-Demonstranten in Dresden", Schriften zur Verfassungs- und Demokratieforschung. p. 56

¹¹⁰ Facebook – PEGIDA. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pegidaevdresden/?fref=ts>

¹¹¹ Decker, O., Kiess, J., Brähler, E. (2016). *Die enthemmte Mitte. Autoritäre und rechtsextreme Einstellung in Deutschland*. Psychosozial-Verlag. p. 137

6 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

6.1 DETERIORATION OF THE ‘OLD’ RIGHT

Interestingly, the UK and Germany have both witnessed the deterioration of their ‘classic’ right-wing parties, British National Party (BNP) and Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) respectively, and an emergence of new right-wing parties, the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). In the last general elections in 2015, the BNP was able to muster a mere 1,667 votes, whereas UKIP reached 3,881,099 votes, amounting to 12.6 per cent of vote share.¹¹² In Germany the story has been similar. In the latest general elections in 2013, the ‘old’ far-right party NPD was able to secure 635,135 of the votes, 1.5 per cent, whereas the then newly founded AfD already gathered 810,915 votes, or 1.9 per cent of the shares.¹¹³ The shift is ever more evident in the most recent federal elections in the states of Saxony, Rhineland-Palatine and Baden-Württemberg in 2016. In Saxony the NPD support dropped from 4.6 per cent to 1.9 per cent, whereas the AfD, in their first state elections secured 24.3 per cent of the votes, making it the second strongest party in Saxony. Arguably, neither in Rhineland-Palatine, nor in Baden-Württemberg, the NPD has played a substantial role before, however the 12.6 per cent and 15.1 per cent reached by the AfD respectively, are another indicator that the party does appeal to many German citizens across Germany, and that a right-wing and populist party can have success not only in the East of the country.¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, the ‘new’ right is cannot regarded to be any less harmful to society as the ‘old’ far-right. As figures indicate, the number of attacks on refugee housing have risen by 500 per cent over the last year alone in Germany. According to the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), see Table 7, in 2001

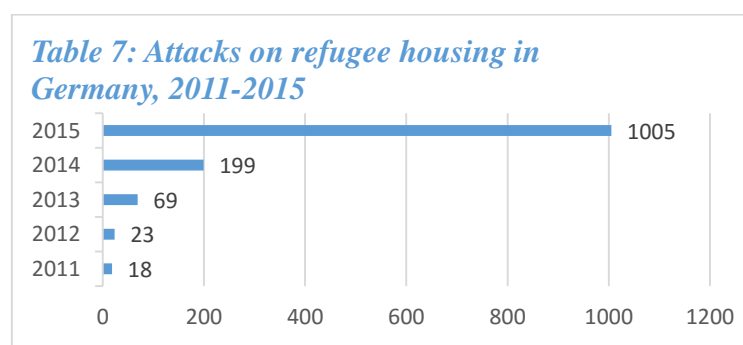
¹¹² *The Guardian*. (2015). Retrieved June 1, 2016, from The Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/ng-interactive/2015/may/07/live-uk-election-results-in-full>

¹¹³ *Der Bundeswahlleiter*. (2013). Retrieved June 1, 2016, from Der Bundeswahlleiter: https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/de/bundestagswahlen/BTW_BUND_13/ergebnisse/bundesergebnisse/index.html

¹¹⁴ *Der Spiegel*. (2016, March 14). Retrieved June 1, 2016, from Der Spiegel: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/wahlen-2016-die-ergebnisse-der-landtagswahlen-im-ueberblick-a-1082093.html>

there have been 18 recorded attacks on refugee accommodation. In 2013, there were 69 cases, in 2014 199 and in 2015 this number erupted to 1005.¹¹⁵ That is a fivefold increase in one year alone, and as statistics of the first six months of 2016 suggest, these figures will be met by the end of the year. The BKA has thus far recorded 563 attacks on refugee housing, including 51 cases of arson.¹¹⁶

With the beginning of the year 2016, the German authorities have begun recording attacks on refugees outside their accommodation separately. According to the records, there have been 824 offences thus far, accompanied by 202 offences against officials, such as politicians, police officers or social workers.¹¹⁷ These worrying figures could suggest that the debate that has been sparked by movements such as PEGIDA and its various branches have contributed to the justification of violence against refugees and lowered people's inhibition level. It is as if it were more socially acceptable to take extreme views on matters such as immigration through the heated debate and thus more people have been driven into taking direct action.



Source: *Der Spiegel* (2016).

¹¹⁵ Der Spiegel. (2016, January 28). Retrieved February 12, 2016, from Der Spiegel: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fluechtlingsheime-bundeskriminalamt-zaehlt-mehr-als-1000-attacken-a-1074448.html>

¹¹⁶ NTV. (2016, June 20). Retrieved June 20, 2016, from NTV: <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/Angriffe-auf-Fluechtlingsheime-reissen-nicht-ab-article17993991.html>

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

6.2 THE ENGLISH DEFENCE LEAGUE AND PEGIDA

One of the most common features of both movements is the utilisation of platforms provided by the internet. The use of the internet, foremost social media platforms, such as Facebook is a viable tool for social movements, including the EDL and PEGIDA. Both organisations rely heavily on this medium to propagate their ideals and mobilise support for their cause, an aspect common to social movements and increasingly important platform for established parties and politicians as well. Both organisations can rely on a relatively large followership on Facebook, combining for over 500,000 followers on Facebook alone, whereas the EDL still attracts slightly more ‘likes’ with roughly 300,000, compared to PEGIDA’s 200,000. Although figures of followership on social media do not necessarily translate into large turnouts at demonstrations, it is ultimately an indicator for the popularity of the organisations and a viable tool to mobilise support in the form of online activism by followers, and propaganda utilised to spread ideals and sentiments.

One can assume that the English Defence League and PEGIDA have a common enemy, radical Islam and the perceived threat of, or rather perceived imminent Islamisation of Europe. It is presumed by both organisations that Islam is incompatible with the nature and culture of Britain, Germany and Europe as a whole. Although, it is officially differentiated by the EDL as well as PEGIDA between Islam and radical Islam, rhetoric at rallies of both organisations have brought into question how far that differentiation actually transpires across the movements respective leaders and supporters. In its mission statement, the EDL demands that British Muslims should be given the opportunity to “safely demand reform of their religion” according to British ideals and culture, to “make it more relevant to the needs of the modern world and more respectful of other groups in society.”¹¹⁸ Hence, Islam is received as and portrayed to be

¹¹⁸ Facebook - EDL. (2016). Retrieved June 12, 2016, from Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/EDL-English-Defence-League-238696516197018/info/?tab=page_info

backward, anti-modern and perceived as incapable of respectful treatment of people with another religious background. Similarly, the position paper ushered by PEGIDA states that it opposes, or rather supports the resistance against a “misogynist, violent political ideology”, whilst simultaneously stating that it does not oppose the local and explicitly the “integrating Muslims.”¹¹⁹ Thus, Islam is once again portrayed as something alien to the European culture and referred to as a violent political ideology, rather than a religion. Both movements offer a simplistic image of Islam, without regards to the manifold characteristics of this religion. An overtly simplistic image and lack of actual differentiation between radical, extremist tendencies within Islam and the religion as a whole can harm societal cohesion and community relations amongst the members of society. Further, a lack of careful differentiation is likely to lead to the alienation of parts of the British and German societies, in this case their Muslim communities.

A major difference between the organisations is evident in their public demeanour at protests and rallies. Whereas the EDL marches often descended into violent clashes with counter-protesters or the police, the PEGIDA rallies follow a strict code of conduct, which for instance prohibits the consumption of alcohol. Thus, PEGIDA was yet able to uphold an image of a middle-class movement, backed by the analysis of the studies conducted about the movement, although the rhetorical contents of the demands show similarities between the two organisations. The EDL quickly earned a reputation of ‘drunk hooligans’ amongst the media and public, while at the same time attracting followers of the established ‘old’ far-right who used the movement’s momentum to press their own agenda and voice their own dissatisfaction with the political establishment. These developments, as discussed above, led to the withdrawal of members of the organisation’s leading circle, firstly Paul Ray, who felt that the movement was hijacked by people with racist tendencies, assisted by the remaining leaders’ unwillingness or incapability to combat these elements, evident for example at the protest scheduled on

¹¹⁹ PEGIDA. (2014). PEGIDA Positionspapier. Dresden, Sachsen, Deutschland.

August 8 (8/8), a date with an inclination for radicals and neo-Nazis. As Tommy Robinson and his cousin Kevin Carroll attempted to counter these elements within the EDL, to portray it as non-racist and anti-Islamophobic, the public had already adopted an image of the EDL to be a racist organisation, also supported by the negative press the movement was making. Unable to reform the movement, the two leaders eventually came to the realisation that their goals were unlikely to be achieved with the EDL, thus departing from the movement, which in turn contributed to its splintering and decline. As Tommy Robinson mentioned in an interview as he announced the founding of PEGIDA UK, there will be a strict code of conduct in place for those supporting PEGIDA UK, including the ban of alcohol at their rallies, in order to uphold a reputable image of the new organisation.

Despite severe conflicts within and surrounding its leadership, PEGIDA has so far been able to recover from these crises. Firstly, the departure of parts of PEGIDA's former leadership circle to found a similar, coexisting, yet unsuccessful social movement by the name of DDfE, as well as secondly, the prosecution of PEGIDA co-founder and co-leader Lutz Bachmann on the grounds of incitement of hatred has not had the same effects on the movement as for instance the departure of Tommy Robinson from the EDL. Yet, one must note that PEGIDA is a relatively young organisation when compared to the EDL. PEGIDA has existed since 2014, the EDL since 2009, whereas the first two years can be regarded to be its most successful, in terms of turnout at protests, its influence and reach within the British society. This may partly explain the differing trajectories the organisations are expected to take in the near future.

It is though important to note that, like the EDL, PEGIDA attracts members of the far-right, yet however, these numbers are not significant enough to actually utilise the organisation's potential for their own gains. As PEGIDA leader Lutz Bachmann repeatedly stated at rallies, the organisation views itself as non-racist as well as being able to withstand the influences of more radical right-wing elements. Arguably, the organisation was indeed able to uphold an image of a respectable movement amongst those who sympathise with the ideals and the means

of the movement. As argued above, this is one central and important aspect of distinction and improvement when comparing PEGIDA and the EDL. From the beginning, PEGIDA has sought and expressed public distance from the established far-right movements, especially violent elements. The position paper and foremost the code of conduct, recited before every rally, including strict behavioural guidelines at public rallies and protests, encompassing the ban of alcohol, have played a role in upholding an image of reputability and seriousness across PEGIDA's followership. Thus, the organisation was with a few violent exceptions (i.e. LEGIDA), able to keep a rather peaceful demeanour, in terms of conduct, thus able to uphold a bourgeois appearance. Unlike the EDL, PEGIDA rallies rarely sparked violent confrontations with counter-protesters or the police, the most notable exception being the first rallies of LEGIDA in Leipzig. Although there was considerable opposition, the confrontations between PEGIDA supporters and counter-protesters were limited to discussions, debates, arguments and other forms of non-violent confrontation, including the use of whistles and chants trying to disturb each other's gatherings. The EDL on the other hand, unintentionally or not, has had trouble containing their supporters and followers, many of the rallies resulting in heavy riots, clashes with the police and counter-protesters, members of local communities and bystanders.

Hence, the difference between the organisations may also be partly explained by the composition of its respective supporters. In regards to the followership of both organisations, the EDL is to be described as a white working-class movement, which, at the height of the movement, attracted a large variety of dissatisfied, disenfranchised young people. Although, as repeatedly highlighted by the EDL's leading circle, the organisation was *de facto* open to all, including members of the LGBTQ-community, people of different faiths and races, the movement largely comprised of white, working-class people. As discussed above, the majority of EDL members, or rather protesters and sympathisers were male and aged under 30. The unemployment rate of EDL supporters at that time was rather high at almost 30 per cent, a possible indicator for a frustration of demonstrators with the political establishment for being

unable to solve these issues. Although, the EDL supporters polled stated that they had joined the organisation and participated in demonstrations foremost, because they wanted to show their opposition to the perceived Islamisation of Britain. Yet, interestingly, the likelihood to join a demonstration of the EDL increased by over 60 per cent, if the EDL sympathiser believed the country not to be on the right track, a sentiment familiar to PEGIDA sympathisers and demonstrators. As mentioned, the main reason for PEGIDA demonstrators to attend the rallies was to voice their dissatisfaction with the political establishment and the political elites in Berlin and Brussels. Hence, it can be concluded that the participants of the respective movements have a shared impression of being left-alone and overlooked by the policy-makers and the decisions that are made. It is thus regarded that the valve to voice these sentiments is presented by these movements.

Strikingly however, is the indication of a radicalisation of the middle-class across Europe, especially evident in social movements such as PEGIDA. One may make the argument, that, in regards to the composition of the EDL's supporters – young, male, large unemployment rate, these attributes of the movement could actually indicate that the EDL is to be regarded an example of a 'classic' far-right movement, or at least a hybrid of the 'old' and the 'new' far-right, since the assumption that far-right movements often attract the disenfranchised, unemployed youth seems to be met. In comparison, PEGIDA is a prime example of a middle-class based social movement indulged in rhetoric and ideals traditionally attributed to the far-right. Yet, the movement has proven capable of attracting a considerable amount of middle-class citizens, indicating that anxieties are growing amongst citizens, as well as a radicalisation of the society's core. These people perceive the platform that PEGIDA provides, to be the sole or most viable opportunity to voice their concerns on a political stage. It is thus not surprising, that PEGIDA comprises of a considerably large number of well-educated, middle-aged, middle-class citizens.

7 CONCLUSION

Concluding, it is to be said that the PEGIDA movement does pose a viable platform for parts of society to channel their frustrations with the political and social developments of their respective countries. The movement is more appealing to ‘*ordinary*’ citizens than the EDL, partly due to the lack of physical violence. PEGIDA relies on parts of the middle-class for their support and has contributed to a rather new rhetoric amongst the German population. The discourse surrounding PEGIDA has contributed to and sparked debates amongst the German society and other European societies, involving issues such as the refugee crisis and a European identity crisis.

The EDL, although at its height attributed the strongest British protest movement since the 1970s, lost its credibility amongst the average British citizen over time, due to repeated misconduct at protest, including violent clashes with counter-protesters and the police, and overall misbehaviour which earned them the nickname ‘drunk hooligans’. The outwardly racist remarks and language contributed to the public image of a racist organisation and only added to the EDL’s decline in popularity. As argued, the movement was not able, or unwilling to keep out extreme elements from the far-right, including Combat 18 and other notorious groups. This has proved not to be a strategy which allows for the mobilisation of more support from the middle-class, the average citizen, in turn a viable scheme to broaden one’s own influence on the perceived faulty political establishment and thus to be able to press an agenda as an extra-parliamentary element of society. This weakness in the organisation’s development is underlined by Tommy Robinson’s departure as well, who now co-operates with others as leader of the UK equivalent to the original PEGIDA movement. The model of PEGIDA is thus to be regarded as more successful, arguably more influential and also more credible. PEGIDA has seem to have taken over a prime role in the Counter-Jihad movement in Europe, with influences in the movements in the United States and Canada.

When regarded as a whole, the cell-like structure model of PEGIDA, with independent cells and groups operating under the same or a similar name allows for the regulation of local objectives and agendas, whilst simultaneously being embedded within the broader framework of PEGIDA and a European Counter-Jihad Movement. The spread of the PEGIDA phenomenon as a whole has naturally contributed to the longitude of its existence, as well as the relative success of PEGIDA as a model. Unlike the EDL, the original PEGIDA movement is local to the city of Dresden, with offshoots quickly forming in other cities of Germany, Europe and North America.

Although, there is a significant number of people who oppose such movements, the CJM is not likely to disappear as such any time soon, especially considering the problems the European continent and the European Union are facing, including the British referendum to leave the EU, the ongoing refugee crisis, a new frequency of terrorist attacks on European soil. Populist movements are on the rise across Europe and the West, indicating a radicalisation of parts of the middle-class citizenry, offering fertile grounds to more radical political parties and a partial societal shift to the right. Right-wing parties have been successful in recent years in virtually all of the European Union's member states, highlighting an increase in nationalist sentiments in the European societies and on the political level, fuelled by social movements such as PEGIDA. Europe is experiencing the establishment and revitalisation of right-wing populist and extreme right-wing parties and authoritarian and Islamophobic movements. The underlying potential of xenophobic and authoritarian sentiments has found a political and ideological platform and has over time removed taboos, making society more prone to radicalise, justify and utilise discrimination and in some cases even violence to achieve its goals. Indeed, the resentments and prejudices increasingly translate into hate and violence.

These patterns may hint at a reality described by Huntington in his '*clash of civilisations*' or may signal a period in which Europe needs to seriously reflect and come to terms with deeply entrenched cultural biases.

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